

THE *Express*

OUR WESTCARE STORIES
FROM AROUND THE WORLD



Welcome from Dick Steinberg

President & CEO

Throughout the month of March, we were proud to recognize and celebrate Women's History Month as well as International Women's Day on March 8th. Additionally, we will be showing our support for the International Transgender Day of Visibility on March 31st.

While the notion of women's history can immediately bring to mind the names and images of famous trailblazers like those highlighted each day in emails from our Diversity Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Staff Work Group, we must remember to not overlook the contributions made by our female counterparts whether they are our loved ones, colleagues, community partners or those that we serve. While it doesn't always make the headlines, history is in fact made every day and in most cases, a lot closer to home than we might think.

Coinciding with Women's History Month, we are proud to feature several amazing stories in this issue that give a spotlight to just some of the many influential women that we are so proud to call a part of our family with stories from: Arizona, California, the Florida Keys, Georgia, Ohio, the Pacific Islands, the Virgin Islands and Wisconsin!

As part of Women's History Month, we collected stories that put a spotlight on some of the high-powered women that we are blessed to have as part of our family and have featured them throughout the month via our social media accounts! While they are all inspiring in

their own way, we would like to take this moment to share just one of these with a particular piece that features Aja Ramos, our Vice President of Operations in Guam! This is her story:

Meet Aja THIS IS HER STORY



In the Pacific Islands, Aja leads a wide array of programs empowering individuals struggling with homelessness, substance use or mental health conditions. By providing culturally competent and person-centered services, Aja is changing lives in her cherished island home. "My proudest moments are the ones that make me feel more connected to my family, my culture and my ancestral lands," she remarked.

At just seventeen, Aja left her idyllic home to pursue an education. This quest took her thousands of miles across the Pacific to Seattle, WA. Moving from her tight-knit community to a big city was a major shock. Away from cultural ties, the transition was hard. And without a strong connection to her new city, gloom set in.

(Continued on Page 2)



(Continued from Page 1 - Meet Aja) "I was anxious and depressed," she said, recalling asking her father about returning home. "My father flat-out told me no." That stern "No" shaped the rest of Aja's Life. After weeks of lobbying with her father to return to Guam, his guidance motivated her to stay the course.

"I dove into my academics, expanded my social circle and started to appreciate my surroundings." Finding a Guam cultural club on campus, Aja was able to connect with others going through the same challenges. The club also gave her a touch of home.

Aja spent eighteen years in Seattle. While building a career in social work, she bought a home, had children and obtained her graduate degree. However, a concern for her father's health brought her back to Guam in 2015. "My father has an incurable disease that has left him legally blind," she explains. As a result, he is very dependent on others for daily tasks. Helping in those moments is a source of pride for Aja. "Some of my proudest moments are when I am with [my father] - making him feel safe and not so alone."

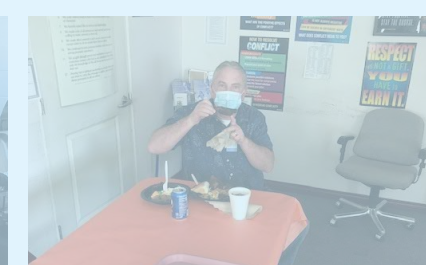
An avid traveler and self-described foodie, Aja continues to make a difference in Guam. During her five years of stewardship, the Pacific Islands has expanded its service offerings to include youth programs aiming to prevent substance use like Maolek Na Lina'la (Chamoru for Life is Good), to supportive services for Veterans like SSVF.

In closing, to all of our amazing ladies who are reading this, we honor your daily contributions and value your choice to be a part of our WestCare family! We hear you and we support you.

Stay safe and stay well, gang.

Dick Steinberg

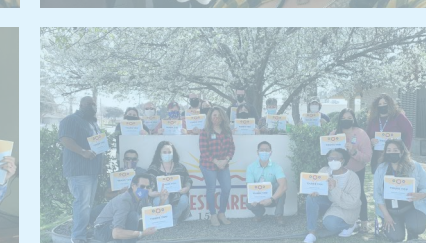
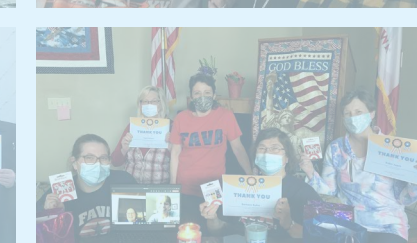
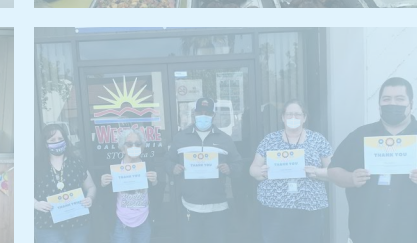
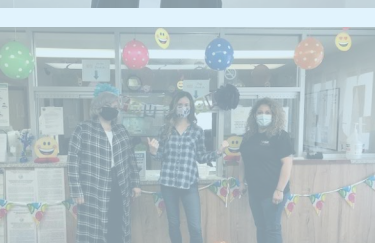
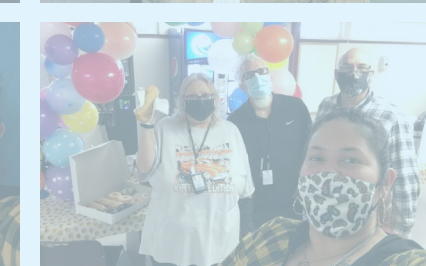
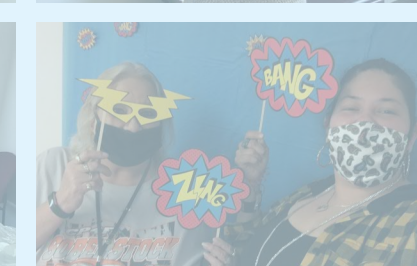
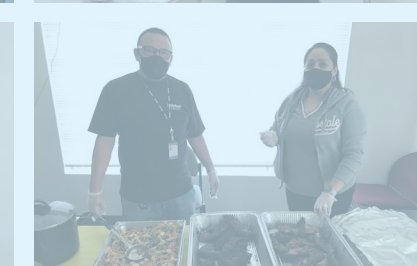




THANK YOU

for all you do

2021 EMPLOYEE APPRECIATION DAY



WestCare Arizona's Advocate Highlight

By Emily Selby, Case Manager, BHT



WestCare Arizona is on call twenty four hours a day, seven days a week thanks to the hard work of our advocate, Stephanie Bethards! She works around the clock helping people in our community in crisis situations including domestic violence victims, individuals that are experiencing homelessness and with anyone needing assistance at the drop of a dime!

Stephanie also works closely with our law enforcement officers to keep victims and their children safe during traumatic events. She has a passion for helping people that come from all walks of life. Stephanie has been our advocate for four years and continues to Uplift the Human Spirit on a daily basis! Thank you for all that you do!



Continue the journey online



WestCare Arizona



@westcareaz



Jennifer Celebrates Ten Years of Recovery!

By Michael Mygind, Marketing Specialist

Every year, March 17th is St. Patrick's Day, but it also marks another special observance - the tenth recovery birthday for one of our amazing Women's Counselors at our MLK Residential facility in Fresno, Jennifer Childers!

To help her celebrate just how far she has come in her journey, the clients that she serves decorated her door!

After sharing her anniversary via social media, we received dozens of great comments from current clients as well as some of our alumni! Here's just a few:

“

Congratulations, Jennifer! I learned some very important things from you that I carry with me every single day! Thank you so much for turning your past struggles into a way of giving back to people like me! I promise to do the same!

- Erin

“

Happy Soberversary, beautiful. I'm super proud and happy for you Jennifer and I'm sure your kids are too. Being sober is a blessing and I'm sure that having 10 years is extravagant. I can't wait for that day to come for myself. Continue reaching for the stars, beautiful. You got this and so many more years to come.

- Nena

“

I couldn't have completed my 6 month-long treatment program without this beautiful lady's support! Now, I have 2 years and 9 months clean and sober and am grateful every day for my new life. Congratulations, Jennifer!

- Nichol

Congratulations Jennifer

Thank you for bringing your experience, positivity and guidance with you each and every day to help us in Uplifting The Human Spirit of those that we proudly serve!



Follow California's story



WestCare California Inc.



@westcarecalifornia



@WestCareCA



Guara Bi - DR Receives the Support of the CND and a Stellar Inspection!

By Yolanda Gonzalezmalave, Program Assistant & HR Coordinator

Guara Bi Dominican Republic was honored to receive a recent visit from retired Police General, Jaime Marte Martinez, the current President of the National Drug Council or Consejo Nacional de Drogas (CND). Guara Bi Dominican Republic and the CND work hand-in-hand to assist our clients in the treatment and subsequent recovery of their addictions as well as through education that raises community awareness regarding drug prevention.

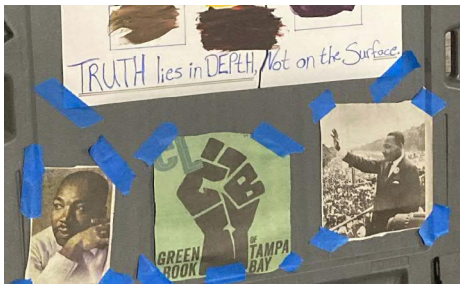
Also, our facilities received an inspection visit by officials from the Ministry of Public Health, whom expressed their satisfaction for the excellent results of the inspection. We would like to acknowledge the hard work of Mr. Yunior Sanchez, Coordinator of Guara Bi Dominical Republic as well as his amazing staff for their outstanding performance and genuine commitment to all individuals served in the program.



See more partnerships

@programaguarabi

Guara Bi



On Thursday, February 18, the clients of WestCare's Gulf Coast Residential Treatment program celebrated Black History Month with day long events. The emcee for the day was William Glover, a residential client who did an excellent job announcing the different events.

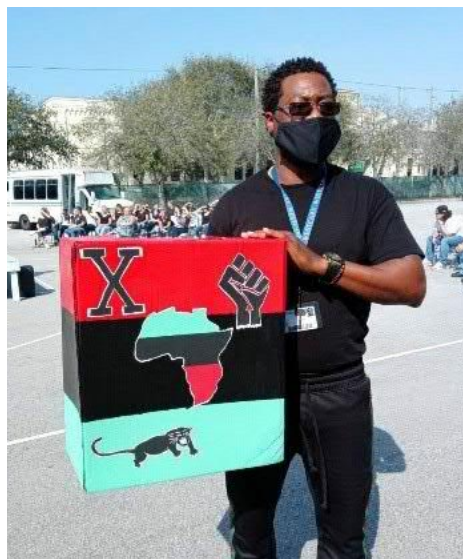
The women of our WEmerge program did an African step dance to the song, "Jeruselema" by South African recording artist, Master KG. At the age of thirteen, Master KG starting making beats in his bedroom. Ten years later he has the entire world dancing to his song. The track sparked a worldwide dance challenge of which the President of South Africa urged people in his country to participate in the dance challenge.

Local speaker, Leon Jackson, spoke on being the last of the Courageous Twelve. Mr. Jackson was one of the first African American police officers in St. Petersburg, FL. He spoke about his experiences as the first black officer and later on, how eleven other black officers were added who collectively became the Courageous Twelve. He is the last living member.

WEmerge clients also sang the songs "Won't He Do It" by Koryn Hawthorne and "Lift Every Voice and Sing" as performed by various artists and known to many as the Black National Anthem.

The male clients of the Focus program spoke about the contributions of Malcolm X and Eartha M. Magdalene.

As part of the event, our clients displayed their artwork of famous African American individuals who have made significant changes to our history. They were also treated to both lunch and dinner with their fellow clients.



Celebrating Black History Month

By Sandra Patnode, Community Program Coordinator, Davis Bradley Community Involvement Center



Follow Gulf-Coast Florida

WestCare GulfCoast - Florida

The Guidance/Care Center: Moving Up and Moving On

BY MAUREEN DUNLEAVY, LMHC, REGIONAL VICE PRESIDENT

Celebrating Deborah's Retirement



It is with much gratitude and admiration that I announce the retirement of Deborah Matthews, LMHC, Clinical Coordinator of Children & Child Welfare Services. Deb has spent a lifetime serving the youth and families of Monroe County with thirty-two and a half years of service to the Guidance/Care Center, Inc. Deb will spend the next nine months moving towards full-time retirement, but will remain on staff part-time to assist with child welfare programs and in a consultative role to her successor.

Deb Matthew's commitment to children's services predates her time at WestCare and the G/CC. When she lived in Miami and worked for the Dade/Monroe Mental Health Board, one of her duties was overseeing, planning and implementation of children's services in both counties. In 1998, several years after moving to the Keys, she was hired by the Guidance Clinic of the Middle Keys (Early G/CC before we became a part of WestCare) to be a Life Skills Counselor at Marathon High School. She remained in that position for twenty-one years and pursued a master's degree and licensure as an LMHC. Deb was then promoted to the Clinical Coordinator for Children's Services position. She has been very proud to serve in this position and our services have expanded dramatically during her tenure. Deb Matthews said that working in this capacity has been her dream job and that she has dedicated a lifetime doing it! We plan to honor Deb in her transition as we are indebted to the services that she has provided to this community.

Congratulations on Your Promotion Amy!



On March 1st, Amy Beeler, LMHC, was promoted to the position of Clinical Coordinator of Children's Services. Amy Beeler, LMHC, CAP began working at the G/CC during her graduate practicum with Nova Southeastern University and later accepted a therapist position in April of 2006. For the past fifteen years, she has worked with the G/CC, the Family Treatment Court Program and the therapeutic behavioral on-site service program in the community. In 2019, she was promoted to Mobile Crisis Response (MCS) Team Leader, providing on-demand crisis services to individuals experiencing a behavioral health crisis. She has provided training and outreach with many local agencies to raise awareness of the 24/7 crisis care available in a community-based setting to stabilize individuals and to avoid the need for jail or hospital/emergency department utilization. She was recognized as the Key Largo Employee of the year in 2018. In addition, she is considered a mental health expert by providing testimonies in court since 1996. Amy has been trained in specialized areas such as Rapid Resolution Therapy/Rapid Reduction Techniques and treating trauma and disassociation. Her areas of expertise include substance use disorders, relapse prevention, trauma and working with children and their families. Amy has demonstrated consistent professional oversight and leadership of our mobile crisis team. She also understands the importance of data in decision-making. Amy assumes additional responsibilities with enthusiasm and due to her outstanding performance, she has managed our programs in a manner consistent with state and accreditation standards. We know that Amy will shine in her new position!

Congratulations on Your Promotion Brittany!



In addition, Brittany Evans, LMHC has been promoted to Mobile Crisis Response Team Leader. Originally from Michigan, Brittany relocated to Islamorada and began working for the G/CC in December of 2015 as a children's therapist. She has excelled in her work while obtaining her clinical license. In 2019, she was recognized as the Key Largo Employee of the Year. Brittany has demonstrated consistent leadership skills and we are excited about this opportunity for her to continue to grow in this new role!



[Learn more about GCC](#)



WestCare Florida

Renovations at The Village South Residential Campus!

By Beatriz Del Rio, *Marketing Director*

The Village South Residential campus in Pembroke Pines, FL started the renovation of the apartments where the women and children we serve reside. So far, thirteen apartments have been renovated entirely. The renovations include new flooring, paint, kitchen cabinets and appliances, bathroom sink with cabinets, toilet, window treatments, new bedroom, living room, and dining room furniture, cribs, toddler beds and baby bassinets, lamps, rugs, bedding, shower curtains and bathmats.

These renovations are made possible with generous donations from **Celia Lipton Farris** and **Victor W. Farris Foundation, Nur Center, Inc. – For Women and Children, O.J. McDuffie Catch 81 Foundation, Craig Zinn Automotive Group, and Community Care Plan**. All the labor for the renovations was done by our amazing staff partners from the FitzHouse and our on-site maintenance staff.

The women and children that come to our center are looking for a safe place to stay and the life-saving addiction treatment they need. One of our main goals is to Uplift the Human Spirit and one of the ways we are doing this is by renovating the apartments they will call home during their rehabilitation.



These renovations are an ongoing process as we have more apartments to be renovated. A ribbon-cutting will take place in the coming months.



Follow the renovation progress



The Village South, Inc



@thevillagesouth



Honoring Doris Michaux

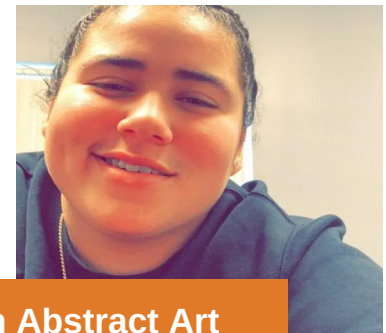
By Joyce Randle, *Administrative Coordinator*

Doris Michaux began and finished her career in the field of social services. She realized early in her professional career that her talents and love was in providing services either directly or through others. Her managerial career began in Merced, California. When her husband in the Air Force was transferred to England, she became a volunteer on base and provided services to military dependents. Upon her return to the states, she was a manager in the Child Welfare Division in Rapid City, South Dakota. When her husband retired, she returned to Madera, California where she ran their Children's and Adult Services. She continued to progress in the field and retired as the Assistant Director of Fresno County's Department of Social Services. In this role, she became the only African-American responsible for a large agency in the state of California. Due to her expertise, she was sought after by the California State Department of Social Services, the San Mateo Department of Social Services and the San Francisco Department of Children's Services.

Doris has served on WestCare's Board of Directors for over forty-six years; thirty years with WestCare California (which was the second state to enter the WestCare family) and sixteen years for WestCare Georgia, which she currently serves as Vice-Chair of our Board of Directors.

Richard Steinberg, CEO of WestCare, stated, "Doris is a jewel and an invaluable resource to the WestCare family. Her dedication is second to none."

It is with great pleasure that we honor Doris Michaux and her many contributions during Women's History Month!



Coping with Abstract Art

By Kendra Webb-Muhammad, *Program Director, Youth Academy*

The youth at the WestCare Georgia Youth Academy are healing through creative expression! Over the past few weeks, our youth have engaged in skill building activities designed to support the implementation of art as a coping strategy for healing with substance addiction. Guided by Lead Behavioral Health Technician, Ashley Denton, the youth that we serve have found peace and creativity through acrylic painting. The purpose of these activities was to pour your heart into sobriety. They made canvases in remembrance of lost loved ones, as motivation for themselves, to share with their family members and for other personal reasons. We hope to continue with this activity throughout the remainder of the year as we strive to continue to uplift the youth that we serve!

Pictured (Left to Right): Acrylic Paintings from WestCare GA Youth Academy, Ashley Denton, Lead Behavioral Health Technician



See more from Georgia



WestCare Georgia



@westcarega



Ed Buckley, Sheridan Correctional Center Employee of the Month

By Melissa Valentine M.Ed., CADC, Program Coordinator

Congratulations to our February Employee of the Month, Counselor, Ed Buckley! Mr. Buckley has been an employee of WestCare since 2010. His knowledge of the therapeutic community and how he relays this information in the orientation process helps prepare our clients for treatment. He has an exceptional ability to reach the most difficult and resistant clients with ease. During programming, you can often find Mr. Buckley visiting the halls of Unit C25 to encourage and engage clients throughout their process. One of his most memorable statements throughout camp is, 'Don't blow your cool.' We appreciate the exceptional counseling skills, experience and knowledge that you bring to the program. Thanks for all that you do!

*Photo taken prior to COVID-19.

Celebrating Black History Through Trivia

By Talisa Paul, MBA, MSW, CADC, Program Director, WestCare Illinois - Sheridan Correctional Center

For Black History Month, the Sheridan Correctional Center held a trivia contest. The committee in charge of the contest consisted of our Supervisors, Denise Schultz and Jonathon Thompson as well as our Counselors, Wendy Brown, Edward Buckley and Melissa Ferraro. Together, they planned and organized activities that consisted of puzzles and a trivia contest, all held virtually and centering around Black History Month. Each building/hall were asked a series of questions and had the opportunity to gain points with the winning building getting an extra commissary day! Our client enjoyed the activity and when the results were tallied, the winners were Unit C19! Congratulations and thank you to all who participated!

New Skills Via Motivational Interviewing

By John E. Zidek, MSW, CADC, Community Treatment Director

The staff of WestCare Illinois participated in a series of three motivational interviewing trainings that started on February 17 and concluded on March 17. All three trainings were led by Bob Carty, a nationally renowned trainer and practitioner in the field of substance use disorder treatment services. Sixteen of our staff members from different locations with varying levels of experience with motivational interviewing were able to participate. From the first phone call with our administrative assistant to a session with one of our seasoned counselors, it is our hope that these trainings will add valuable skills to their toolbelts!



Follow for more new happenings in IL



The Bayer Foundation Gives Back to Veterans in Need

By Darlene Terrill, Regional Administrator of Iowa Operations



WestCare Iowa/FAVA (Family Alliance for Veterans of America) recently received assistance through the Bayer Foundation in the form of a \$6,000 grant! Their foundation's belief is that giving is not just about writing checks - but enabling and strengthening organizations that are working to make impactful and sustainable contributions within their communities.

Through the support of the **Bayer Foundation**, the organizations that they have supported have been able to continue enriching thousands of lives, including those of the Veterans and families that we serve! As a philanthropic arm of Bayer in the United States, their foundation develops programs and makes strategic investments to qualified non-profit organizations who are tackling big challenges such as combatting malnutrition and food insecurity, enhancing STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math), education and providing supportive services for patients and families who are managing cardiovascular disease and cancer.

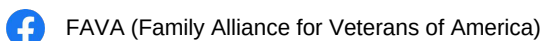


Their generous grant enabled us to fill our pantry with food and purchase several microwaves that will enable our recently housed Veterans to prepare their meals in their new apartments! All Veterans that are served by us are in some form of crisis, have been living on the streets and have lost everything. Thanks to Bayer, we can assure that those who have selflessly fought for our country will no longer have to worry about malnutrition or food insecurity.

This was a wonderful gift that has really made a difference for the Veterans that we serve in Boone County and surrounding areas where this type of assistance can be very limited!



Read more Veteran support stories



Thank you Bayer Foundation!



Reintegrating Individuals Successfully Every Day (RISE)

By Jeremie Delauder, MAT Research Assistant

Thanks to our partnership with Goodwill Industries of Kentucky and their RISE program, the justice-involved clients in WestCare’s Kentucky facilities throughout Pike County have learned valuable life, communication and job skills to help them better prepare for life after incarceration.

To date, more than twenty-five WestCare Kentucky clients have completed the RISE program! Clients often tell us that they feel more confident now about reentering the workforce after their stay with us ends. In other cases, some of our clients are preparing to enter the workforce for the very first time, but thanks to the RISE program, now have the skills to help them succeed as they get ready for reentry!

For more information on this amazing program, we’d like to share a statement from Goodwill’s website: www.goodwillky.org.



— “ —

We embrace the justice-involved community with our Reintegrating Individuals Successfully Every Day (RISE) program and we’re assisting more Kentucky job seekers with disadvantages than ever. RISE has been offered since 2018 in the Louisville area and now we’ve expanded our services to Lexington, Bowling Green and Pikeville!

Participants of the RISE program take part in a two-week session – now offered virtually – to learn valuable life and job skills including financial literacy, digital literacy, communication skills, health and nutrition and behavioral health. They are awarded a Work Ready Certificate upon graduating, which helps individuals reintegrate back into employment. RISE also allows participants a chance to earn a Chromebook, a stipend and a gym membership or equipment upon graduating.

— ” —



Follow for more in Kentucky



Adoped by the Raiders Nation Wrecking Crew

By Leo Magrdichian, LCSW, LCADC, Vice President of Operations

The Las Vegas chapter of the Raider Nation Wrecking Crew recently adopted the clients of the Women and Children’s Campus and Harris Springs Ranch as their beneficiaries. This community outreach group has visited us in front of our women’s campus on several occasions bearing gifts and a great deal of positive energy. During their last visit, they were also accompanied by members of the California chapter whom also decided to direct their efforts toward supporting our WestCare clients!

Boxes of hygiene supplies including shampoo, conditioner, body wash, deodorant, lotion, hair brushes, shavers, toothbrushes and toothpaste; undergarments including socks, t-shirts, underwear and flannel pajama bottoms; children’s items including clothing, books, crayons, coloring books and toys were all a part of what our clients and their children received from this group.

We are extremely grateful for their efforts towards helping us in Uplifting the Human Spirit of those that we serve in residential treatment! Thank you again to the Raider Nation Wrecking Crew for their generosity and support!



Keep up with Nevada





Ohio Students Receive ACT Prep and Let Their Creativity Shine!

By Abby Hofrichter, *Communications & Social Media Coordinator*, Hofrichter Creative LLC.

Many of our East Dayton students had things to be proud of this past February. The Youth Champions Program, led by Nicholas Chartain, had a record turnout for the ACT Prep Program, a partnership with Sinclair Community College to help prepare high school students for the ACT and cover the cost of testing. Eighteen students attended the three required sessions and took their test, which they are now awaiting results for.

Meanwhile, two of our Camp Mariposa campers, Rita S. and Nevaeh M., won in the Montgomery County Sheriff's Drug Free Coalition contest, an annual poster contest for students grades six to twelve to increase awareness of the harmful effects of substance abuse. Students could enter either a poem or a poster. Rita took 1st Place for her poster and Nevaeh took second Place for her poem. Both girls did phenomenally at the awards ceremony, where Prevention Services Coordinator, Wendy Berkshire helped present awards.



[Learn more about East End](#)

East End Community Services

@eastendcommunityservices

I would like to thank all the staff here at WestCare Oregon DBA VETcare for all their tireless work through this pandemic. The staff here in Oregon have made it possible to keep the facility running at over sixty percent capacity through these trying times. Through the hard work and dedication, our staff have been able to keep the COVID virus out of our facility and kept all of our clients COVID free with the attention to detail to cleaning and sanitation practices, as well as ensuring all of the clients get tested on a weekly basis. I would like to thank WestCare once again and our staff here in Oregon for all your dedication to our Veterans.



[Learn more about VETcare Oregon](#)

VETcare Transitional Program

"Dying Matter" By Nevaeh M.

Drugs, most of us know it,
While others don't, for whom people who take them wait,
For freedom because they are trapped in a dying matter,
Which they can't escape.

It's pain for family, friends or anyone.
Harmful depression, lack of energy,
trapped by demons that take over who they are,
Who they want to be...
Who they can be.

People suffer and can't stand this happening,
They don't know how to cope with this in life.

But I am not trapped in the dying matter
Because I know what truly matters.

I know that I didn't cause it,
I can't control it,
I can't cure it,
But . . .

I can take care of myself by communicating my feelings,
Making good choices and celebrating myself.

What truly matters are those who are free
help me with these things,
And find a new way to not be trapped in a dying matter.



A Thank You to the Team

By Raymond Powers, *Program Director*



Palau Youth PREP'd for the Future!

By Anisa Hanser, Youth Educator - PREP PATHways (Palau)

Our Personal Responsibility Education Program (PREP) team in Palau started their eighteenth cohort of participants at George B. Harris Elementary School in the month of February. Twenty-three sixth grade students are the new participants for PREP's evidence-based curriculum, Draw the Line/Respect the Line (DTL/RTL). The kids have been so anxious to start the class, according to their homeroom teacher. The PREP team meets with the participants four times a week, alternating each day with DTL/RTL and Relationship Intelligence lessons.

DTL/RTL focuses on providing our young participants refusal skills, which includes learning the steps to say no and providing the opportunity to practice by acting out scenarios with each other. The homeroom teacher shared that the scenarios are realistic, especially in the school environment. Through their time with WPI Palau team, the students are learning and sharing different ways to say no to high pressure situations.

Seeing the participants and having the opportunity to interact with them has been a great motivation for the WPI Palau team. The youth enjoy the lessons as seen in their active engagement and participation by sharing their thoughts through discussions during sessions. The participants enjoy it so much that the youth desire to have longer sessions with the team!

*Pictured: WPI Palau Youth Educator, Anisa Hanser, guides participants through an activity during one of their PREP sessions. *NOTE: Palau remains free of COVID-19 at the time of this publication.*



Continue the journey online



WestCare Pacific Islands



@westcare.pi



Inauguration of Guara Bi Guaitiao

By Yolanda Gonzalezmalave, Program Assistant & HR Coordinator

On February 26th, Guara Bi proudly inaugurated our newest addition to our programs, Guara Bi Guaitiao. This is a SAMHSA program dedicated to offering educational and prevention services to young people between the ages of thirteen to twenty-four. Among the services offered are: educational talks, counseling based on scientific evidence, case management, referrals, rapid HIV testing, supporting services and special incentives available to program participants. In our native Taino language "Guaitiao" means "Friend." It is our hope with this new program that we make friends with all of our young clients, help them recognize the social pressures regarding drugs and provide them with the assertiveness and skills to avoid falling victim to peer pressure and drug abuse.



Second Anniversary of Guara Bi Yara Ri

Our Medication-Assisted Treatment clinic, Guara Bi Yara Ri, celebrated our second anniversary with great joy, pride and hope. Over the past two years we've been working hand in hand with the Mental Health Services and Addiction Administration (ASSMCA) in offering services to all our clients with by means of supporting services, transportation, therapy and more. With many blessings to come, we aim to serve and support individuals fighting with substance abuse disorders as we help them through their process of rehabilitation.



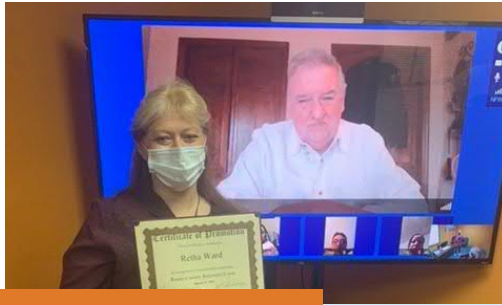
See what's happening in PR



@programaguarabi



Guara Bi



The Judge with a Heart

By Janice Church, Area Director

I had the privilege of interviewing the Honorable Judge Dennis W. Humphrey at our office. I named this article, "The Judge With A Heart," because I have worked with him for over nine years in different capacities. I first met Judge Humphrey when I was a child abuse investigator for Roane County. He showed great concern for the children and their parents and always made sure that the children were safe. He also took the time to identify the needs of the parents with the ultimate goal of reuniting families if possible.

Judge Humphrey serves as Roane County's judge for general sessions, their juvenile court and their recovery court. Dennis was born in Harriman, TN. He attended Roane State and Tennessee Tech University and took a class from the University of Alaska before going to law school in Nashville, TN. When asked about his early work history, he said that he built houses with his father, which was fulfilling to be able to work alongside and learn from him. During his last year of law school and the year after graduation and passing the bar, he worked with the Court of Criminal Appeals as a law clerk for Judge Charles O'Brien. He then began a private practice that served Lebanon, Nashville and Murfreesboro for about two years. In 1984, he returned to Roane County and was hired as Assistant District Attorney for the Ninth Judicial District until 1998. That year, he was elected as Roane County's General Sessions Court Judge and still remains in this position. When asked what he enjoyed about working for the district attorney, he responded that it was getting justice for victims and their families.

Judge Humphrey has been a judge for twenty-three years. When asked if he would run again in 2022, he said that he plans to run one more time, but wants to continue to be a part of the recovery court and assist the community as much as he can. When asked why he decided to be a part of the recovery court, he said with a smile that he first agreed to be the recovery court judge because of the opportunities that he'd get to attend conferences and various trainings. But, after a couple months of presiding over the recovery court, he saw the differences in the participants' lives and discovered that his new purpose was to help those in need and assist the community in dealing with the overwhelming problems that addiction causes.

When asked about his family, he said that he has a daughter who is 18 and will graduate from high school this year as well as a twenty-year-old son

that is attending college. He said that he was blessed with loving parents and two loving brothers. He feels that building healthy family relationships is important. This is the reason why he wants to help families stay together. Through the recovery court, he has seen many children and parents reunited as well as family relationships repaired. He pointed out that in 2019 and 2020, four babies were born drug free to recovery court participants and feels that this is one of the highlights of the recovery court.

Judge Humphrey said that he has accomplished many things in his life and career, but is most proud of becoming a father. Outside of his career, he loves horses and owns several that sometimes get out and he'll have to chase down. Another interesting fact is that he worked on the Alaska Pipeline. He also enjoys telling jokes.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, he continued to hold recovery court through BlueJeans video calls. Up until recently, he would come to the WestCare office and log in to hold these hearings, but now logs on from home.

He takes an interest in the lives and progress of each participant in recovery court because he is "A Judge With A Heart." As the treatment provider for Roane County Recovery Court, I have to say that we are lucky to have a judge that cares so much about our participants. He is always available to assist and encourages those in need to seek treatment.

— “ —

Recovery Court allows me to follow the spirit of the law to achieve justice for everyone and to encourage and support recovery.

— ” —

I want to end this article by saying that Roane County is lucky to have a judge that cares so much about the community and its citizens. He is a judge that looks at the person as a whole and looks for ways to help, not just punish. He has taken the time to learn about the disease of addiction and how it changes people and how recovery can change people. I am honored to be able to say that I have the privilege to work with him. I have learned a lot from him and look forward to nine more years.



Follow for more stories in Tennessee





Experiencing Impacts of a Harsh Winter Storm Firsthand

By Linda Papayanopolus, *Community Engagement Coordinator*

Texas faced record-low temperatures during a harsh winter storm this February, leaving millions without heat or water — a life-threatening situation in a state unaccustomed to and unprepared for the extreme cold. Although the unprecedented weather was shared by millions left shivering in their own homes, the suffering was not equally distributed. While many people faced dire situations without the most basic of needs, some left their homes in search of warmth and water and others shared circuits with critical facilities like hospitals that had electricity.

Luckily for us at WestCare, our leader and Vice President, Beverly Watts Davis, immediately began checking on WestCare staff and following up with them for days to make sure that they were all right. At one point, she was not able to reach me because my cell phone battery had died leaving me with no way to charge it. Although snow and ice made most roads impassable, she was able to have a staff member who lived nearby to come to my home to check on me. With Beverly's help, we were able to check into a motel where we could stay

safe and warm until the electricity to our homes could be restored.

Without water and after days of power outages, many Texans had lost perishable food and were struggling to get more. Many grocery stores had been picked clean or closed while food banks were trying to hand out food as quickly as they could. Most restaurants and fast food businesses were closed due to power outages or having run out of food, leaving us at the motel without access to food. Once again, a WestCare staff member responded quickly and brought us some homemade soup to sustain us for a couple of days.

Then, as power began to be restored, millions more Texans discovered that their taps had run dry, pipes had burst or water treatment plants had failed and that they had to boil their water before using it. By then, WestCare Texas staff members were able to turn their focus back to the needs of the community and joined forces with Bexar County Commissioner, Tommy Calvert and other organizations that were on the ground helping people obtain food and water

and transporting the most vulnerable people from our community to warming centers.

“ This winter storm has affected so many people, over such a widespread area in communities that simply aren't prepared for this kind of weather – we've never seen anything like it. I am so proud of our staff and grateful that they were able to reach out to support one another through this difficult time.

- Beverly Watts Davis

Even during times of personal crisis, our WestCare Texas staff truly personify WestCare's motto of Uplifting the Human Spirit by making every effort to help people heal.



Keep up to date with Texas



14th Anniversary: Marsha Taylor

By Yolanda Gonzalezmalave, *Program Assistant & HR Coordinator*

February 26th, 2021 marked fourteen years since Marsha Taylor has been serving at The Village - VIPIR. However, she has always been destined to work at The Village and become its leader. Back in high school, Marsha was a part of The Village's Teen Theater Improvisation Group. Although she has a background in Criminal Justice, her heart led her to something greater – serving the forgotten members of our small society here in the Virgin Islands. From her days as a mental health specialist for the MIHSA (Mentally Ill Homeless Substance Abuse) program to the Regional Director of the Virgin Islands facility today, Marsha has accomplished so much and has impacted many lives throughout the years. Happy work anniversary, Marsha!

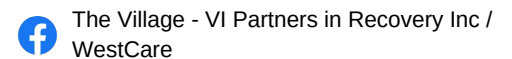
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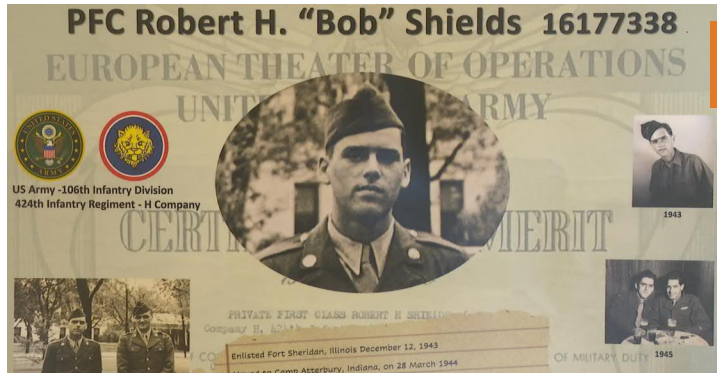
AMERICAN METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH WOMEN'S GROUP

At The Village – Virgin Island Partners in Recovery (VIPIR), we recently had the privilege of receiving a generous donation of food items and cleaning supplies from the American Methodist Episcopal Church Women's Group. We are very grateful to work hand in hand with organizations like theirs and strive to highlight the importance of developing initiatives that promote the health of our community.



Follow along for more





Honoring our World War II Veterans

By Donald Lachman and Andrea Talmadge

According to the Department of Veterans Affairs, around 400 of the remaining 400,000 World War II Veterans die every day. By the year 2036, it's estimated that there will be no living Veterans from that war left to recount their experiences, which is why it's important to honor them while we can.

WWII Veteran, U.S. Army Private First Class, Robert H. Shields, is among that remaining band of brothers as a member of the U.S. Army's 106th Infantry Division, the 424th Regiment's "H" Company. Unfortunately, on December 16, 1944, Robert and his fellow soldiers were about to make history. When the Battle of the Bulge opened at 0530 hours, Robert and his unit were ordered to block and slow down the advance of an armored juggernaut, Germany's 5th Panzer Army!

This historic battle was the final major German offensive campaign on the Western Front during WWII. Launched in a thickly forested region in Belgium, it was intended to tear open the Allied lines, allowing the Germans to encircle and destroy four allied armies and force the Western allies to negotiate a peace treaty.



“

We could hear those big German tanks roaring and moving around," said PFC Shields, 95, recalling his World War II experience as if it happened yesterday. "I knew they were going to be attacking and sure enough, they did. The whole German line attacked," recalled PFC Shields. "We held out to the last. I was pumping mortar shells out there."

- PFC Shields

By repeatedly delivering accurate mortar fire into the advancing enemy, PFC Shields repelled several enemy attacks on December 16th. The following day, the enemy scored direct hits on the sections mortars as well as the section leader, but PFC Shields led a team that remained in position and provided mortar and small arms fire throughout the battle. On December 17th, the 424th Regiment made a successful withdrawal to St. Vith, Belgium. Shields and his fellow infantry members of the 424th were later awarded the Bronze Star as a unit.

Circumstances changed for Robert when his niece, Mary Proffit, a rural librarian and combat Veteran, participated in a formal service collaboration hosted by WestCare Washington/WAServes. Mary joined a leadership team that successfully established the inaugural model teleservices program offered at rural libraries called the Veterans Connection Café, VCC. During this experience, Mary saw firsthand the power and connections that Veteran Services Officers (VSO) like Gary Walker with the Lacy American Legion Post 94 have in connecting benefits and resources exclusively available to Veterans. She also discovered the reach that Veteran organizations possess with fellow service officers across the country. Gary helped Robert obtain long overdue benefits from the VA including hearing aids and glasses as well as help organize the awards ceremony with colleagues in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

On Friday, March 12, 2021, at 11:00 a.m., a current officer serving in the U.S. Army, along with many of PFC Shields' family members and friends, gathered at the St. Stephen Catholic Church to support him as he finally received his Bronze Star Medal. The Army officer read PFC Shields' citation and pinned the Bronze Star on him.

Mary flew in from Washington State to be present for her uncle's long overdue ceremony and recognition. "If you read the citation of what he did and what he endured to earn this, it's remarkable," Mary said. "For him to be able to be recognized, it means the world to me."

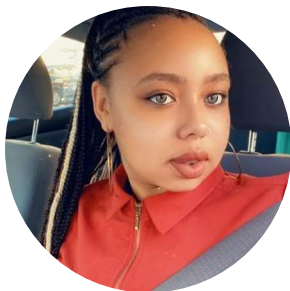
“

I knew that I was awarded [The Bronze Star Medal] but I never got it. I thought, if I tried to call the United States Army in Washington DC about a medal that was given in 1944, whoever I would be talking to would hang up, you know."



Celebrating Graduations: Markeda and Dominique

By Felicia Williams, LST Program Director



Markeda Williams, Research Assistant with the newly awarded Drug Free Coalition grant graduated from MC2 (Milwaukee Community Cyber High School) in 2017. Markeda started her journey with WestCare Wisconsin through the Careers Plus Program in 2018. When one program ended, she was fortunate to return to work with us through others grants and programs as a result of her dedication and hard work. She also worked under the Community Engagement Team, which strengthened her implementation of grassroots connections that had been made. Through the Resiliency in Communities After Stress and Trauma (ReCAST MKE) grant, she eventually became the supervisor of the EARN & LEARN Summer Youth Employment Program made possible through Employ Milwaukee. During her time, she has been awarded with different positions, which has given her an opportunity to better serve her community.

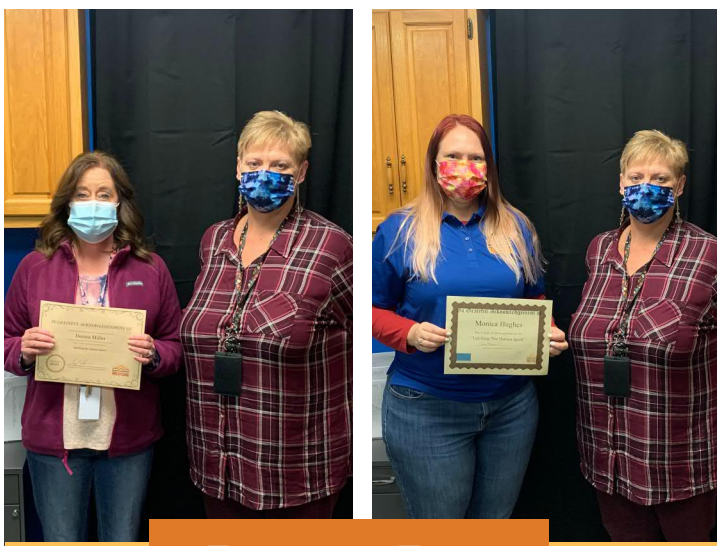
Dominique Williams graduated from Pulaski High School in 2013. Dominique first started off at WestCare by volunteering through our E.A.T.S Food Pantry. "Being able to show how dedicated I was to WestCare, I earned summer employment through the ReCAST program assisting with serving older adults by cutting grass or cleaning around their homes with them for their safety," said Dominique. Through hard work, and when the opportunity presented itself, he became the first Food Pantry Coordinator for WCWI. "Because WestCare Wisconsin has been fortunate with favor from our community, I am now the Prevention Specialist, under the Cream City Credible Messenger Grant with Milwaukee County," added Dominique.



Keep in touch with Wisconsin



WestCare Wisconsin



Tennessee Team

Kudos to our amazing team!

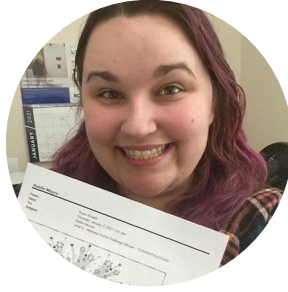
KUDOs to Monica Hughes, Roane County Recovery Court Counselor who was hired on 1/1/2017. Monica received acknowledgment and a gift card from Janice Church, Area Director.

KUDOs to Donna Miller, Therapist for Offender Re-entry Program who was hired on 2/3/2020. Donna received acknowledgment and a gift card from Janice Church, Area Director.

Fourth Quarter 2020 Wellness Challenge Winners



Kimberly Andre



Kaitlin Moore



Andrea Garcia



Katrina Pruitt

2020 Level Two Points Challenge Winner

Congratulations to **Kimberly Andre**, our Therapist & Care Coordinator at WestCare's The Village South! She is the winner of our 2020 Level Two Points Challenge Drawing!

Kimberly joined WestCare in June 2016. Originally from Haiti, she came to the United States in 2005. Kimberly received her Associate Degree in Nursing from Miami Dade College, then entered Florida International University to complete her Bachelor of Social Work degree in 2012.

Enjoying her career in social work, Kimberly completed an advanced master's program and obtained her master's degree in social work (MSW) in one year. Subsequently, Kimberly received her LCSW and even went to Cincinnati to be trained in MBD (Moving Beyond Depression) Therapy.

With WestCare, Kimberly works primarily with pregnant and post-partum women. She is married, is a new homeowner, enjoys bible study, educating herself in her field, and cooking. Fun fact: Kimberly speaks English, French, and Creole!

In her spare time, Kimberly enjoys spending time outdoors with family and friends, sustaining old relationships, and building new friendships. You can find Kimberly attending free event classes and learning new crafts from Michaels such as knitting and crocheting.

2020 Level Three Wellness Points Challenge Winner

Shoutout to **Kaitlin Moore**, our Payroll Associate, and winner of our Q4 Level Three Wellness Points Challenge Drawing! Kaitlin joined WestCare at our Foundation office in Nevada in July 2019. Originally from Southern California, Kaitlin has lived in Denver, CO, Jacksonville, Kissimmee, and New Port Richey, FL - wherever her wife's work took them and their two dogs: Luna the Lab and Lilly the Beagle. She says her dogs are her life.

Before joining WestCare, Kaitlin was a dog groomer and wanted to be a veterinary technician, but decided she loved payroll more! In her free time, Kaitlin loves puzzles, brainteasers, camping, and exploring the outdoors of Florida and California. Fun fact: Kaitlin and her wife have completed 50 escape rooms with many more in their future!

Fourth Quarter 2020 Healthy Selfie Winner

Shout out to **Andrea Garcia**, Senior Case Manager at our STOP Area One Program in Sacramento, for being the Fourth Quarter 2020 Healthy Selfie Drawing winner!

Andrea joined WestCare in May 2020. Originally from Southern California, Andrea was previously an eighth grade teacher for twenty years before deciding to help others in a different capacity. That's when she made the jump over to WestCare bringing her ten years of experience working in the substance abuse field.

As a graduate of UC Davis, Andrea is a Certified Counselor with a CADAC 1. She is married, has two grown children and a dog. She enjoys her evening run on the treadmill where her dog is always by her side.

2020 Level Three Wellness Points Challenge Winner

Congratulations to **Katrina Pruitt**, Case Manager at WestCare Florida's Guidance/Care Center in Key West! She is the winner of the Fourth Quarter Wellness Challenges Drawing!

Katrina joined WestCare in July 2020. Originally from Los Angeles, she came to WestCare after joining the Peace Corps. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, her deployment was canceled.

Before enlisting in the Peace Corps, Katrina worked at Lakeland Regional Health for fifteen years, five of which in the Intensive Care Unit as a Mental Health & Addiction Screening in the Mental Health & Addiction Recovery Unit & ER.

Katrina has an associates degree in Radiological Science and Medical Assisting from Keiser University, an associates degree in Liberal Arts from Polk State College, and a bachelors degree in Biology and Psychology/Pre-Medical from the University of South Florida.

As a mom of four children (three boys and one girl), she enjoys genealogy, reading, and traveling when can do so. Katrina is thrilled to have just passed her certification for becoming a Certified Behavioral Health Case Manager (CBHCM).



Happy Anniversary!

Years of Service

Arizona

- Kelly Horst, 4 years

California

- Melissa Gaither, 1 year
- Agnes Schenley, 6 years
- Monica Alvarado, 1 year
- Terri Phanhnoung, 3 years
- Alma Paredes, 5 years
- Deborrah Macklin, 3 years
- Tina Diaz, 5 years
- Mary Greene, 6 years
- Felicia Lippen, 6 years
- Stephanie Buck, 1 year
- Anna Marie Grant, 1 year
- Leticia Almendarez, 14 years
- Josephine Alonzo, 2 years
- Maricela Velasquez, 2 years
- Britany Persel, 1 year
- Christopher Phillips, 1 year
- April Gonzales, 20 years
- Desiree Besas Jacobs, 2 years
- Angel Ramirez, 1 year
- Carmelita Demus, 6 years
- Charlene Ju, 5 years
- Vanessa Madrigal, 1 year
- Mark Binowski, 1 year
- Violetta Lugo, 1 year
- Arthur Portillo, 1 year

Florida - Guidance/Care Center

- Lois Babb, 21 years
- Maureen Dunleavy, 15 years
- Megan Davidson, 7 years
- Sandra Lightfoot, 8 years
- Edwin Gomez, 3 years
- Cynthia Herndon, 2 years
- Amy Beeler, 15 years

Florida - GulfCoast

- Linda Driver, 5 years
- Katrina Tucker, 15 years
- Caron Landis, 2 years
- Mack Riley, 1 year
- Akeelah Holloway, 1 year
- Karen Mesa, 1 year
- Willie Jones, 16 years
- Patricia Keys, 6 years
- Deanna Douglas, 2 years
- Yolanda Lang, 7 years

Florida - The Village South

- Talisa Dominguez, 4 years
- Arturo Bolanos, 2 years
- Collene Brown, 2 years
- Beatriz Del Rio, 2 years
- Karen Hubbard, 2 years
- Sana Jindani, 2 years
- Ricardo Roberts, 2 years
- Carolina Tauler, 2 years
- Joy Waite, 2 years
- Rafic Sabbag, 9 years
- Sylvia Stigar, 3 years
- Artesia Brown, 4 years
- Yasmin Lazo, 4 years
- Minerva Hill, 5 years
- Consuelo Comisso, 12 years
- Andres Diaz, 26 years

Foundation

- Melanie Stevens, 7 years
- Valerena Candy, 9 years
- Richard Steinberg, 43 years
- Joshua Lopez, 2 years
- Leonardo Martinez, 22 years
- Frank Rabbito, 17 years
- Robert Vasquez, 4 years

Fitzhouse Enterprises, Inc

- Barbara Mason, 12 years

Illinois

- Trista Leaming, 10 years
- Angela Lyons, 2 years
- Patricia Pelaez, 3 years
- Christina Urban, 2 years

Kentucky

- Reginald Kaigler, 7 years
- Kaylene Burke, 2 years

Nevada

- Elizabeth Kelly, 2 years
- Marlynn Larivee, 5 years

Pacific Islands

- Mia Madlambayan, 1 year

Puerto Rico

- Mayda Rosado, 2 years

Tennessee

- James Martin, 1 year
- Janice Church, 5 years
- Kaitlyn Schaub, 1 year

Texas

- Costella Green, 1 year

Virgin Islands

- Elizabeth Torres, 3 years
- Patricia George, 13 years

We appreciate you!

Employee Engagement

Hello, WestCare Family!

Below is the monthly calendar for April 2021. We are making our way into the 2nd quarter already and for some of us, things are starting to open slowly, but surely. Think of it like Spring, which has already begun!

Thanks again for all that you do.

Have a great month!

- Susan A. Rinaldi, Director of Employee Engagement, WestCare Foundation

APRIL 2021



SUN					MON					TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
<small>MARCH</small> S M T W Th F S 28 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10					<small>MAY</small> S M T W Th F S 25 26 27 28 29 30 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 1 2 3 4 5					30	31	APRIL FOOL'S DAY 1 Leave a small treat for a coworker with an anonymous note of appreciation!	GOOD FRIDAY 2 Plant a tree in memory of someone.	 Knit something for someone to cherish.
EASTER 4 Set positive intentions for the week.	5	6	 Gift a loved one a scrap book of shared memories.	ZOO LOVER'S DAY 8 Spend the afternoon going to the zoo with the children in your life.	9	FREE DAY! Find a way to show someone you care.	10	Listen to a podcast or read about a topic that is new to you.						
NATIONAL PET DAY 11  Buy your pet a new toy or treat.	12	RAMADAN BEGINS 13 Write a letter to your younger self and forgive past regrets.	14	INTERNATIONAL MOMENT OF LAUGHTER DAY 15 Listen to an upbeat playlist while getting ready or during your commute.	16	Invite a neighbor over for dinner.	17	Learn something new..Take a dance or exercise class.						
18	19	NATIONAL TEA DAY 20 Enjoy a pot of tea with a friend over a long chat.	21	EARTH DAY 22 Participate in the cleanup of a local river, pond, or lake.	23	Donate blankets and/or supplies to a local animal shelter or charity.	24	Treat yourself to a bubble bath surrounded by candles and relaxing music.						
25	26	27	28	 Babysit, dog sit, or cat sit for free.	HONESTY DAY 30 Be honest with yourself and others today.	1								

Visit www.randomactsofkindness.org for more kindness ideas.

RANDOM ACTS OF KINDNESS FOUNDATION®

Grants & Resource Development



Grant Talk

By Lisa Jackson, GPC - Interim VP of Grants

Grants have many acronyms. We have them for funders' names like SAMHSA, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Service Administration. We have them for rules, regulations or standards such as GAAP or Generally Accepted Accounting Principles. We also have them for any long title that we might deal with. We even make them up for our own programs like HART (Healthy Alternatives Require Transitions) in Miami, FL or BEAT (Behavioral Education And Treatment) in Fresno, CA.

There is also common terminology that does not make sense outside of the grant world such as Uniform Guidance, which stands for the Office of Management and Budget's (OMB) Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards.

Sometimes, you need a glossary in order to make your way through a conversation since there are so many acronyms that mean the same thing! Take for instance, a funding solicitation also known as a RFP (Request for Proposal), a FOA (Funding Opportunity Announcement) or a NOFA (Notice of Funding Availability).

Well, the department did just that! We put together a glossary. It may help you as you work on your next funding opportunity. It is six pages long, but if you would like a full copy of the complete document, please send a request to: lisa.jackson@westcare.com

In the meantime, here are some of the more frequently used terms:

NOA: A Notice of Award is the official award document that specifies the amount of funding, project period and any special requirements or restrictions.

OMB: The Federal Office of Management and Budget issues financial instructions or information to federal agencies, which are then passed down to grant recipients.

BJA: The Bureau of Justice Assistance provides leadership and services in grant administration and criminal justice policy development to support local, state and tribal law enforcement, justice information sharing, countering terrorism, managing offenders, combating drug crime and abuse, adjudication, advancing tribal justice, crime prevention, protecting vulnerable populations and capacity building.

CDC: The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention conduct critical science and provide health information that protects our nation against expensive and dangerous health threats and responds when these arise.

HHS: The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services enhances the health and well-being of all Americans, by providing for effective health and human services and by fostering sound and sustained advances in the sciences underlying medicine, public health and social services. A family of agencies is housed within HHS including the ACF (Administration for Children and Families), the CDC (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention), the HRSA (Health Resources and Services Administration), the NIH (National Institutes of Health) and SAMHSA (the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration).

Non-Competitive Renewal: A continuation or renewal grant provides additional funding for budget periods subsequent to the initial budget period. However, with non-competitive renewals, the applicant is not competing for funds, but additional funding can instead be awarded assuming that their delivery of services and reporting are both satisfactory.

CFDA: The Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance is a database of all federal programs available to state, local government and non-profits.

OJJDP: The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention provides national leadership, coordination and resources to prevent and respond to juvenile delinquency and victimization. OJJDP supports the efforts of states, tribes and communities to develop and implement effective and equitable juvenile justice systems that enhance public safety, ensure youth are held appropriately accountable to both crime victims and communities and empower youth to live productive and law-abiding lives.

RAM: After applying for a grant, the Federal Program Official (PO) or Grants Management Specialist (GMS) may ask for additional information to be submitted in the form of a Request for Additional Materials.

Continuation Grant: A continuation grant provides additional funding for budget periods subsequent to the initial budget period. It is also referred to as a renewal grant or non-competitive renewal application.

Competitive Grants: An award of financial assistance in the form of money or property in lieu of money by the funding entity to an eligible grantee, usually made based on a competitive review process.



WestCare Supports Identity Management Day

Adapted from information shared by the National Cyber Security Alliance (NCSA)

WestCare is pleased to support and participate in the first 'Identity Management Day,' an annual awareness event which will take place on the second Tuesday in April of each year. The inaugural Identity Management Day will be held on April 13, 2021. The mission of Identity Management Day is to educate businesses and consumers on the importance of identity with a special focus on the dangers of not properly securing identities and access credentials. The National Cyber Security Alliance (NCSA) provides the guidance below to ensure that online identities are protected through security awareness, best practices and readily available technologies.

Think Before You Click

If you receive an enticing offer via email or text, don't be so quick to click on the link. Instead, go directly to the company's website to verify it is legitimate. If you're unsure who an email is from - even if the details appear accurate - or if the email looks "phishy," do not respond and do not click on any links or open any attachments found in that email as they may be infected with malware. Attackers often send fraudulent email and text messages to trick individuals into providing information such as usernames and passwords or to download malware.

Share with Care

Think before posting about yourself and others online. Consider what a post reveals, who might see it and how it might affect you or others. Consider creating an alternate persona that you use for online profiles to limit how much of your own personal information you share. Personal information that is readily available online can be used by attackers to do a variety of things, including impersonation and guessing usernames and passwords.

Lock Down Your Login

Create long and unique passphrases for all accounts and use multifactor authentication (MFA) wherever possible. MFA will fortify your online accounts by enabling the strongest authentication tools available, such as a unique one-time code sent to your phone or mobile device. Generate and remember different and complex passwords for each of your accounts. Duplicating passwords or using common passwords is a gift to hackers. If one account is compromised, a hacker will typically try the same username and password combination against other websites through "password spraying." A second method of authentication provides extra protection even if a username and password is compromised.

Keep a Clean Machine

Keep all software on internet connected devices, including personal computers, smartphones and tablets current to reduce risk of infection from ransomware and malware. Configure your devices to automatically update or to notify you when an update is available. Software updates often fix security flaws. Outdated software can be riddled with security holes easily exploited by attackers.

Get Savvy About Wi-Fi Hotspots

Public wireless networks are not secure. Anyone could potentially see what you are doing on your laptop or smartphone while you are connected to them. Limit what you do on public Wi-Fi and avoid logging in to key accounts like email and bank accounts. Consider using a Virtual Private Network (VPN) or a personal/mobile hotspot if you need a more secure connection. Attackers can insert themselves between your device and an unsecured Wi-Fi network to intercept account information and other sensitive data or to download malware on to your unprotected device.

Own Your Online Presence

Every time you sign up for a new account, download a new app or get a new device, immediately configure the privacy and security settings to your comfort level for information sharing. Regularly check these settings at least once a year to make sure that they are still configured to your comfort. Attackers are likely to try the default login information for internet connected devices to try and gain access. While the default settings for most online accounts provide the website owner with the most information for a personalized experience, loose privacy settings could mean your data is being shared without your knowledge.

For more tips and advice, visit: www.identitymanagementday.org

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Workgroup



DEI Staff Work Group Mission Statement: The Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Staff Workgroup seeks to facilitate the organization's ongoing and continuing efforts to foster a culture and atmosphere of mutual respect and to attract, retain and promote outstanding staff from all backgrounds, perspectives and abilities.

Hopefully, you were able to read an article about this staff workgroup in a previous edition of the WestCare Express that gave a brief overview of who we are. This article will provide you with a little more information and will challenge you to get involved.

We are a group of staff who individually have an interest in the ideals of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) for ALL people. Collectively, we are very focused on those same ideals being evident within our own organization. What better way to show we believe in and practice it as we work together to Uplift the Human Spirit than to make sure that we are tuned in to what is happening within WestCare regarding DEI? To make this happen, we have been meeting and discussing ways to impact our staff and ultimately our clients with new and/or enhanced awareness around this topic.

You will receive a calendar invite announcing the time for a unique event on April 28th – mark your calendars! On this date, WestCare will be hosting its first ever Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Town Hall. We would like as many of you to attend this live event as possible, but know that this is not always possible. So, it will be recorded for you to listen to later. We will account for time zones in the invite – you'll just need to accept the invite and plan on being there with us.

Our WestCare Board of Directors has also developed a similar subcommittee and we are working side-by-side to ensure that we are aligned in both our focus and message. To this purpose, we had an introductory meeting with the Board where we shared who we are and the reasons for our individual commitments. During the Town Hall, you will hear some information about an additional holiday that the Board has approved for all WestCare employees. You will be given information on the history about this day and why it was chosen to be honored and approved by the Board to become an official employee holiday beginning this year.

Recently, you have been receiving information about Black History Month and Women's History month. We plan to keep this adventure in education going and are hoping to entice some of you to get involved in helping us to share the wealth that knowledge brings to all of us. We have some cool ideas for the months ahead, but nothing concrete just yet. So, if you are interested in becoming an active member of the workgroup, use the email address at the end of this article to get in touch. We welcome your participation.

We want your feedback – thoughts, feelings and opinions about what we have done so far as well as your ideas. Soon, a survey will be distributed providing you with just that opportunity to be involved in this important process of recognizing DEI. Please take the time to respond and help us achieve our goal of getting all of WestCare involved and fully engaged in this important discussion.

Soon, we will be introducing subcommittees. Yes, this is an actual working group that will be producing results. The subcommittees will help us with dispersing information, developing educational modules for staff and clients and coming up with plans and other activities. Stay tuned to the WestCare Express for more information on the committees and what you can do to contribute.

If any of what you have read above is interesting, exciting or got your curiosity going, please contact us and get involved!

Email address: DEI Staff Workgroup – Diversity@westcare.com

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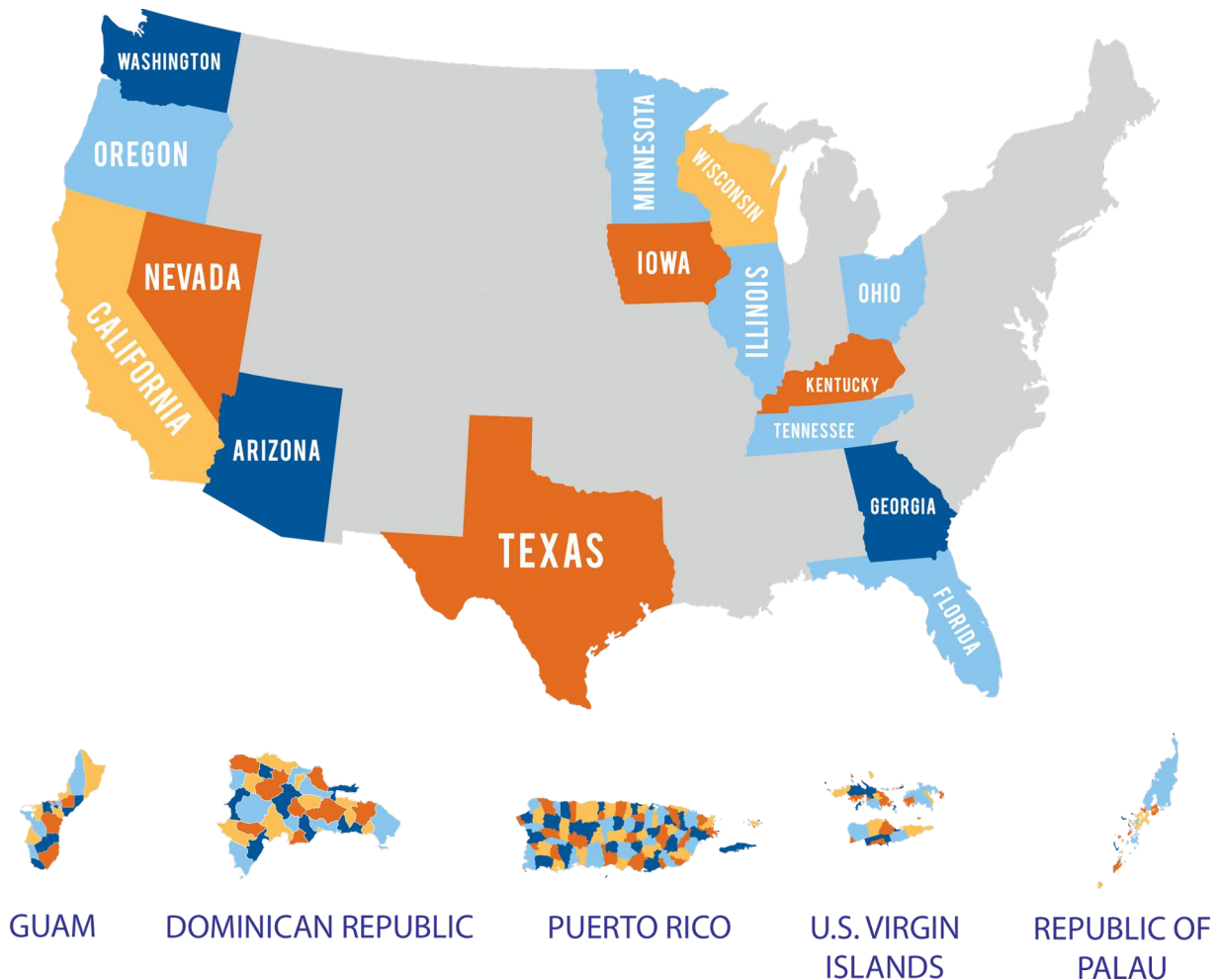


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