

THE *Express*

OUR WESTCARE STORIES
FROM AROUND THE WORLD



Welcome from
Dick Steinberg

President & CEO

This month, we are proud to celebrate two observances that tie in closely with our various services. The first of which, **Mental Health Awareness Month**, is a month of awareness regarding mental health and the importance of having honest conversations about how it affects each and every one of us. It is only through this open dialogue that we can even begin to erase the stigma surrounding mental illnesses and make reaching out for help more of a possibility for those who are struggling as opposed to something to be ashamed of. Whether it's co-occurring disorders or PTSD and other forms of trauma, mental health affects so many that we serve from those in treatment to our Veterans who have served for our country. As an organization, we proudly stand in support of both increased awareness and acceptance regarding mental health.

Our second highlighted observance is **Military Appreciation Month**, a month in which we are proud to recognize our six branches of the U.S. military as well as our current service members, our Veterans, our military spouses, and those whom we have lost. As an Army Veteran who was stationed in South Vietnam, it fills me with pride to see the many different programs that we provide for our Veterans both in the states and in the territories that range from linkages to services, housing assistance, transitional housing, vocational support and more! While many were subject to the draft in previous decades, the military is often an option for many who would like to serve their country following high school. But, when they come back from their service, help with adjusting back into society may not always be available. That is where we are

proud to come in! One such individual is Dan, a Veteran served by our WAServes team in Washington, whom they've featured in their article for this month on page nine. To all of our Veterans that we serve, our staff who have served or members of our family with someone who is either active duty or a Veteran - we salute you for your dedication to our military and our country.

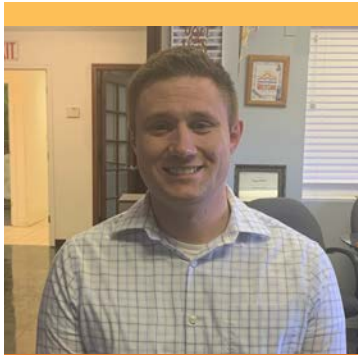
Whether it's recognizing the conditions that can affect us all or honoring the selfless few who have put their lives on the line for us to continue enjoying our way of life that we have come to love and cherish – we hope that you stand with us.

Stay safe and stay well,

Dick Steinberg

WestCare is proud to endorse a bipartisan bill between Nevada Congresswoman, Susie Lee (D-NV) and Michigan Congressman Fred Upton (R-MI), the **Virtual Peer Support Act**. Originally introduced in the Senate earlier this year by Nevada Senator Catherine Cortez Masto (D-NV), this bill would create a \$50 million grant that would continue to support the delivery of virtual mental health services throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. We'd like to send our sincere thanks to the office of Congresswoman Lee for inviting us to endorse this important bill that would allow us to continue to serve our individuals in need remotely in a flexible setting as we continue to endure the current pandemic. [Click here](#) to read the full press release.

SUPPORTING VIRTUAL MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES



An Alumni Returns as Staff

By Cheryl DeBatt, *Director*

As a director, counselor, or case manager, being a part of something more than just an office brings much joy into coming to work each day and is reflected onto all of those that we help. A family is much more than those that we live with, but can also include those that we work with. One of our biggest accomplishments is when a former client becomes a staff member. This is one case where we know that we have made a difference in the life of another - having seen just how far they've come.

When we have to say goodbye to one of our staff, it is a bittersweet moment. There are mixed feelings as we only want what is best for someone that we've worked alongside for years. But, when an opening for their position is posted and applied for by an individual that

we have personally watched grow, the sadness is overturned.

Martin Williams participated in WestCare Arizona's programs about five years ago and today is our new and wonderful administrative assistant! When the position was posted, it was much to our surprise to see his name as an applicant and then to see him walk through the door for the interview. Once a young man in need and now a professional enrolled in college and about to complete his degree in medical billing, we are so proud of him for many different reasons. We welcome Martin to our team and to our WestCare family with open arms and gratitude that he chose WestCare to further his career!

Welcome, Martin!



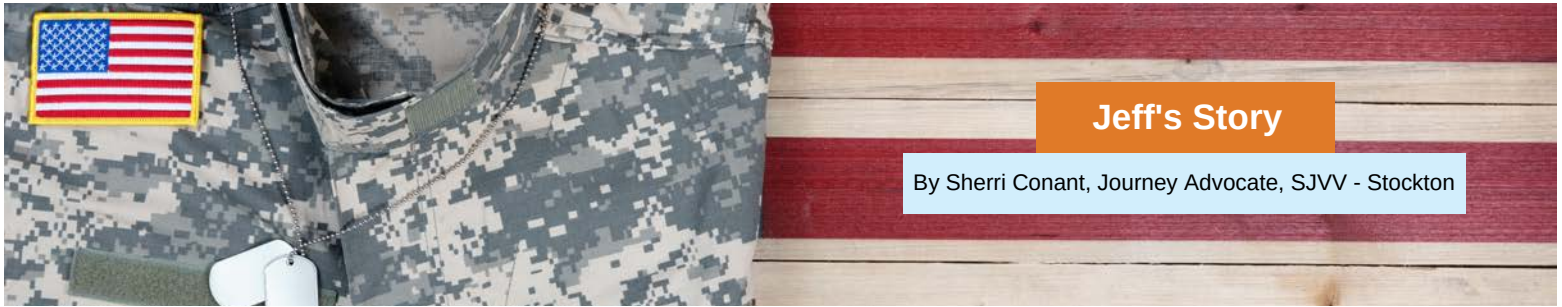
Learn more about Arizona online



WestCare Arizona



@westcareaz



Jeff's Story

By Sherri Conant, Journey Advocate, SJVV - Stockton

Jeff came into our program last spring with no job, no income, and no hope. He had worked in construction, specifically concrete work, since getting out of the military, but hurt his spine late the year before. He was denied disability since the injury happened while doing his own home repairs and not on the job. He had struggled during the onset of COVID-19 to get doctor's appointments, assistance with disability payments and even getting medication. By the time that he called the **San Joaquin Valley Veterans (SJVV)** office in Stockton, he was out of options.

In talking to our Program Coordinator, Sean, he stated that he was ready to, "Just end it all." He said that he was worth more to his wife dead than alive because at least his life insurance would provide for her for a little while. Sean brought one of our advocates the screening and Jeff was contacted immediately. Using strength IDs, motivational interviewing techniques, and some good old-fashioned humor, he began to see himself differently by the end of that two-hour phone call.

Jeff learned how to advocate for himself again and taught himself how to maneuver the new medical system despite COVID-19 protocols. He worked diligently to improve his communication and found new hope in the successes that he has had along the way. He went from, "Just going to end it all," to, "I have too much to do to go out now." This Army Veteran is a success story in how just being a partner, a listener and a resource provider can improve the mental health of an individual.

He exited the program in early May, was excited to be on his own, and prepared for what may come. In the last year, he obtained permanent disability and a surgery date for his spinal injury. He has also been able to negotiate with his landlord and found the strength to care for his wife when her health took a turn. He, like so many of our Veterans, came into our program flat out and ready to give up. Jeff stated at his exit interview, "It is amazing what one year can do for a man. How that year can change you in so many ways just by having someone cheering you on. Thank you to your entire team for everything that you do."



Read more success stories online



WestCare California Inc.



@WestCareCA



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Spreading Awareness for the Health of Our Community

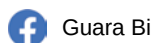
By Yolanda Gonzalez Malave, *Program Assistant & HR Coordinator*

Guara Bi - Dominican Republic recently participated in an outreach event in collaboration with the **National Council for AIDS Treatment (CONAVISIDA)** that focused on education to the community regarding the prevention of sexually transmitted diseases and the prevention of drug abuse. This event was aimed at the general population and emphasized condom use as the most effective method of preventing the spread of these diseases given the increased incidence of cases among young people.

The main objective of the day was to increase the public's awareness of their responsibility for improving both their sexual health and that of the people with which they relate, in turn, reducing the impact of sexually transmitted diseases. We also provided attendees with informational materials regarding the prevention of the use of controlled substances.



Learn more about Guara Bi online



Learning and Practicing Better Health

By Jack Shaw, MCAP, *Counselor*

The clients and staff of **Turning Point** in St. Petersburg hosted an informational health fair organized by the third-year doctor of physical therapy students from Gannon University in Ruskin, Florida. Topics covered were: "Sleep and Sleep Hygiene," "The Importance of Staying Hydrated" and "More Stretching, Less Stressing."

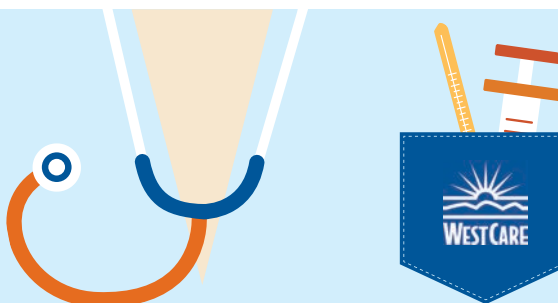
The fair transformed from a presentation to an interactive event as the clients all participated in a series of stretching exercises with the future doctors! We anticipate an ongoing relationship with Gannon University as the students are required to complete community service hours as well. They greatly appreciated the enthusiastic engagement that they received from those that we serve at Turning Point!



Connect with us online



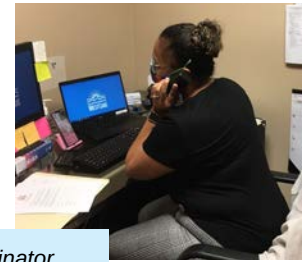
NURSES WEEK
THANK YOU FOR
ALL YOU DO!





The Other Side of the Fence

By Carol Dochow, LMHC, Program Coordinator



As a society, we often find ourselves judging individuals who have violated the law and believe they deserve incarceration as a punishment. What we frequently don't realize is that many offenders are incarcerated due to behaviors related to mental health and/or substance use disorders. Although incarceration can be a motivating factor to inspire change, most individuals are released back into the same environment with the same people and old problems from their past. How do they change even with the best of intentions?

The **Guidance/Care Center's** program, **The Other Side of the Fence (OSF)**, provides intensive outpatient treatment to adult male offenders at risk for HIV or who have HIV due to high-risk behaviors associated with substance misuse and/or mental illness. OSF's target population includes racial and ethnic minorities,

the LGBTQIA+ population, and previously incarcerated individuals. Some clients are court-ordered to the program because they want early release from jail or are seeking a lighter sentence. However, many clients volunteer for the program hoping to get prevention assistance from returning to old behaviors that lead to reincarceration.

One such client, Robert, was living in a tent on the side of the highway and drinking alcohol to cope with stress, mental health symptoms, and past trauma. He slowly began to trust the staff and started receiving therapy and case management for multiple issues. Robert was at high risk for recidivism and contracting HIV. OSF staff linked him to a Veterans housing program and a Social Security disability attorney. By the time that Robert completed the program, he was living in permanent Veteran's housing, receiving

SSDI benefits, attending 12 step meetings, adhering to his psychiatric medication regimen, and addressing his past trauma. Robert expresses his gratitude to OSF by saying, "I didn't know I could live a different way and I wouldn't be here without the program."

OSF staff includes a program coordinator, licensed clinical social worker, two care coordinators, and a research assistant to provide individual and group therapy, CLEAR counseling, HIV testing, psychiatric care, and trauma resolution. In addition, case management services are provided to assist clients with acquiring stable housing, employment, and food stamps as well as linkages to recovery/peer support, primary health care, and potential SSI benefits.



Learn more about G/CC



WestCare Guidance/Care Center, Inc



Healthy Start Adapts and Excels During the Pandemic

By Beatriz Del Rio, Marketing Director



Connect with Us



The Village South, Inc



@thevillagesouth



@thevillagesouth

March 2021 marked one year since **The Village South's Healthy Start** program adapted its service delivery from in-home visits to telehealth due to the COVID-19 pandemic to keep the care of the pregnant/postpartum women and infants that they serve as their top priority. Program Director for Healthy Start, Pam Ungvary, and her team worked diligently to not only adapt to new guidelines but also expanded mental health services and continued to collect and distribute much-needed baby supplies to mothers in need during this challenging time.

Since shifting to telehealth, the program has received significant positive feedback from consumers. Many mothers have welcomed the

change because of their ongoing concern with having people in their homes. Virtual sessions have also increased flexibility to reschedule, allowing services to continue without much disruption. The success of this service model has doubled the program's enrollment as the staff does not need to travel between sessions and can meet with more mothers per day. Additionally, the program has expanded its psychosocial counseling services with clients who have expressed greater mental health needs due to the pandemic. To accommodate the increased capacity and expansion of services, the program has hired additional staff to offer more education and support to mothers and infants.

As we continue into year two of the pandemic, we are both hopeful and optimistic about what the future holds! Our staff and community partners continue to work together to ensure that happier and healthier babies are born within our community regardless of the current limitations and changes.

For additional information on the program or ways that you can assist us in Uplifting the Human Spirit by giving our babies a Healthy Start, please feel free to contact Pam Ungvary, Program Director for Healthy Start, by sending an email to: pam.ungvary@westcare.com.



The Youth Academy Participates in MayFest!

By Kendra Webb-Muhammad, LPC, NCC, CPCS, Program Director

Every year, Carroll County presents the **MayFest Arts and Crafts Festival** in Carrollton, Georgia's downtown district, the largest festival in the local area. For this year's event on May 1st, our **WestCare Youth Academy** was proud to not only attend but sell art as well!

The festival allows for local businesses and community members to come together to browse and purchase handmade arts and crafts, tasty treats, and specialty items made available by hundreds of vendors. Family-friendly entertainment was also provided at the amphitheater!

Our clients' artistic efforts were introduced to local churches, commissioners, restaurateurs, colleges, mentorship programs, and more! Our youth were able to interact with local community members and partners by not only sharing their art but their testimonies about their WestCare experience. They also shared how they identified colors associated with moods and thoughts and how the act of pouring paint allowed them to creatively share their feelings and cope with the daily stressors and urges associated with substance abuse.

They were successful in not only showcasing, but selling all twenty-five pieces of art that they brought to various members of the community! All proceeds will allow the youth to buy additional canvases and art supplies to support their creative ventures. Our participation in the event also resulted in an increase in referrals as well as calls from community members who were interested in donating items to support the program. We are so proud of the youth and their growth. We look forward to the opportunity to continue this artistic adventure by expressing their stories through art and sharing it with others throughout the community. Great job, gentlemen!



Follow our journey online



WestCare Georgia



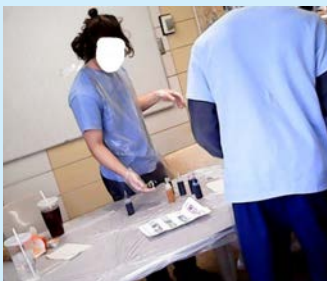
@westcarega



Visiting IYC - Harrisburg

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

This April, some of our Chicago staff got to travel to our **Illinois Youth Center (IYC) - Harrisburg** site to visit! During their visit, they got the opportunity to tour the facility and learn more about the program. They were able to participate in several "Seven Challenges" groups with the youth that we serve. The Chicago and Harrisburg staff were able to share their knowledge and experience in working with justice-involved youth. They had a great time and hope to return soon!



Kudos to the Staff of IYC - Harrisburg

In April, the youth served at Illinois Youth Center (IYC) - Harrisburg requested to have a "drug-free party." During this party, they got food from one of their favorite restaurants, McDonald's, tie-dyed facemasks, listened to music, and enjoyed an afternoon of prosocial activities. Many of them had never tie-dyed before and were excited to learn to design something on their own that they could wear around the facility!



Follow our Harrisburg team online



WestCare Illinois



Celebrating the Service of Glenn Pannkuk

By Barbara Ruitter, *Data Entry*

An avid supporter of **FAVA/WestCare Iowa** throughout the years, **Glenn Pannkuk** has presented a regular Veteran's Day event for our program and has always been supportive of our annual chili cook-off and silent auction fundraising events. "I have been supportive of FAVA mainly because of what you do for our Veterans and the community," Glenn said. He truly loves FAVA, who takes care of the soldiers who have once fought beside him and gave so much to our country.

Mayor, Barney Ruitter of Forest City, Iowa holds high regard for Glenn, whom he states is, "An honest, intelligent and trustworthy person with great integrity. Glenn does not brag about his military experience or make himself out to be a hero. Soldiers like Glenn, who lived it, put it in the

back of their minds, go on and be the best that they can be. You don't forget those things, but they make you a stronger and better person. I was always impressed by Glenn's exemplary service to the people and country. While in the service, Glenn's strong leadership skills included respecting the other soldiers and they respected him. He is a pillar to be admired."

After Glenn enlisted, he achieved the rank of E8 Master Sergeant. He was drafted into the military in 1966 and served in Vietnam for two years. During his first month in Vietnam, thirty-one soldiers were killed. That was ten percent of the platoon that he was in. *He said, "These were young men who did not know the difference between their weapons and a tree branch."* It was a very sad situation.

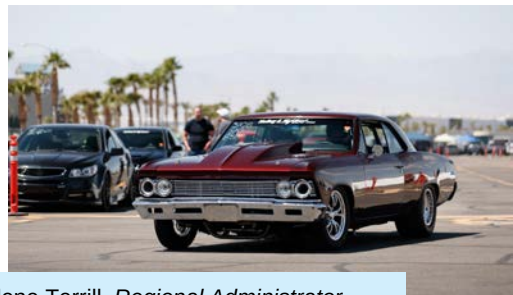
After ten years off, he enlisted in the U.S. National Guard, where he served in Desert Storm. His total service time was over twenty-five years. The things that he enjoyed most in the military were being a platoon sergeant and training fellow soldiers. His motto with his men was, "We might never be first or best at anything. That's fine. But, if we do our best, we will never be last at anything." Glenn truly loved his men and protected them as much as he could.



[Read more stories online](#)



FAVA (Family Alliance for Veterans of America)



Holley LS Fest West at Las Vegas Speedway

By Darlene Terrill, *Regional Administrator*





In late April, **WestCare Nevada's** transitional housing clients were offered the opportunity to earn money at the **Holley LS Fest West 2021** three-day race weekend at the Las Vegas Speedway. The invitation came from the **Ultimate Street Car Association (USCA)** Membership Director, Carrie Strange, and President/CEO/Co-Founder, Jimi Day, who invited us to assist with conducting pre-registration and manning the merchandise sales areas.

With CDC guidelines followed, permission was granted for the host USCA to operate five separate events including drifting, drag racing, off-road racing, and a car show. Event organizers were surprised with approximately 11,000 in attendance. The race coordinators did an excellent job of assuring public safety by taking temperatures at the gate, practicing social distancing, and having sanitizer available in key locations.

Fifteen WestCare transitional living clients worked throughout four days and quickly learned the tasks of registering all and learned how to take orders of merchandise at a near sell-out tent. We have never been prouder of our transitional living clients who worked 13-hour days with lines of hundreds waiting to make their purchases! Racing officials provided each volunteer with a uniform t-shirt, hat, sunglasses, masks, and other miscellaneous items - which were an additional highlight for those who chose to participate. Depending on how many shifts each client worked of the 38 slots available, they were able to earn between \$300 - \$600 each over the course of four days.

The consensus of the clients was that this was quite a remarkable gift that boosted their self-esteem, provided new work skills that could be added to their resumes, and taught them the importance of teamwork and customer service. What an opportunity this was for them!

WestCare is currently the only charity that the USCA supports in Nevada. We are also grateful to be named the charity for their next annual fundraiser in November 2021! Thank you, USCA!


[Keep up with Nevada](#)
 WestCare Nevada
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Don't Call It a Miracle! Our Miracle Makers Are Back in Person!

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



After months of virtual programming, East End Community Services' **Miracle Makers** after-school program welcomed our pre-K through sixth-grade students back to in-person activities in April! Thanks to the hard work of our Miracle Makers team, led by Ellen Mays, registration for all but one grade level was full. To prepare for in-person sessions, our team surveyed parents about their experience with our virtual programs, hosted a number of virtual information sessions and social events with parents, and created new protocols for pickup and attendance to keep their students safe. Students were excited to be back with their friends and teachers while learning new things and making the most of their after-school hours!



Learn more about East End



East End Community Services



@eastendcommunityservices

Creating Brighter Futures

By Katrina Carranza, *School-Based Clinician* and Daime Rivera, *Youth Services Specialist*, Ma'lak Na Ha'ani

May is Mental Health Awareness Month. Make your mental health a priority! **WestCare Pacific Islands'** youth program, **Ma'lak Na Ha'ani** or **Bright Futures**, is a trauma treatment program for youth ages eleven to seventeen who are living in Guam. The team took part in the Youth Mental Health First Aid event facilitated by certified trainers from the **Guam Behavioral Health and Wellness Center**. Youth Mental Health First Aid is an interactive course that aims to raise awareness in communities on how to recognize

and respond to youth who may be experiencing a mental health crisis.

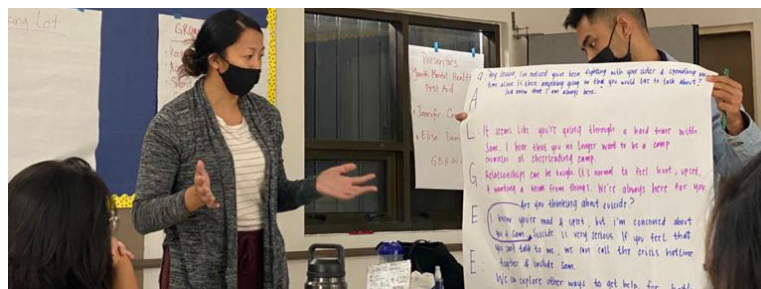
The industrious staff of Bright Futures obtained skills paramount to readily assess youth who may be at risk of suicide or self-harm including listening empathically and without judgment, providing reassurance of emotional support and information, and encouraging the connection to appropriate professional help. This will considerably propel the program's mission to

provide critical mental health support and treatment services to youth at multiple school sites on the island of Guam.

This training comes at an opportune time as the **Guam Department of Education (GDOE)** has now implemented face-to-face instruction, which has allowed the team to be at their designated schools to build relationships, receive referrals for new clients, and conduct individual counseling and/or psychoeducational sessions to youth.



Ma'lak Na Ha'ani staff joined other WPI team members in completing training certification for Youth Mental Health



Program staff conducted an outreach at one of their school sites to build relationships



Continue the journey online



WestCare Pacific Islands



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Educating on the Use of NARCAN

By Yolanda Gonzalez Malave, Program Assistant & HR Coordinator

Guara Bi - Yara Ri, in collaboration with the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's (SAMHSA) Puerto Rican affiliate, the Puerto Rico Administration of Mental Health and Anti-Addiction Services (ASSMCA), gave an educational presentation to staff and clients' families about the treatment of known or suspected opioid overdoses with the use of the drug, **NARCAN (naloxone)**. Those present were informed that opioid overdose deaths remain a critical problem during the pandemic and that naloxone is a safe and readily available prescription medicine that can save someone's life by reversing the effects of an overdose. NARCAN kits were distributed that read, "NARCAN: A gift of love. An opportunity of life."



Follow the journey online



Guara Bi



The Certification in Addiction Conference

Thanks to a collaborative education and business development agreement with the country of Argentina, we were proud to partner with **Asociación Civil Modelo Minnesota**, **Un Regalo de Dios**, and the **Education Ministry of Uruguay** to present as part of the recent **International Certification in Addiction** conference held in the city of Queretaro, Mexico. Certification was awarded to all participants after a day of international presentations. Mr. Guillermo Ferrando and Gabriel Avena from Modelo Minnesota presented on the problematic issue of substance abuse and our own, **Mr. Cristian Duarte**, presented on the variety of substance abuse treatment services that are offered internationally by WestCare Foundation. Thank you to Mr. Abraham and Adan Alvarez for the warm hospitality and for allowing us to be part of this great event!



In Vaccine Search, Love and Community Find a Way

Wire Article By Cary Clack, San Antonio Express-News

A few weeks ago, two teachers who'd once worked together crossed paths in a local Costco. It had been more than 20 years, but even behind their masks, the two women recognized each other. Their conversation quickly turned to COVID-19, with one expressing frustration that she'd been unable to get her 101-year-old mother vaccinated. Her friend told her about the **COVID Community Outreach Program**, or CCOP, the grassroots effort to register the vulnerable and underserved for vaccinations.

The program began with Black women doing what Black women have always done: Identify a problem, then organize to solve it for the benefit of people beyond those in their communities. The impetus for CCOP came the last weekend of January when two sisters, **Francine Prosser-Johnson and Bonnie Prosser Elder**, tried to help a friend's mother get an appointment. Over the weekend, the two dialed, repeatedly, on four cell phones and one landline. On Sunday, after more than 2,000 attempts, Bonnie,

General Counsel and Senior Vice President with VIA Metropolitan Transit got through.

She told the woman who answered, "I feel like I've hit the Lotto to get you on the line and to allow me to schedule this shot, not even for me - but my friend's mom."

Also, in January, the offices of **South Texas Center for Pediatric Care**, where Fran is Chief Operating Officer and Dr. Dianna Burns-Banks is President, were getting frequent calls asking if it was offering vaccinations. The calls the sisters were making and the calls the center was receiving, underscored how desperately people wanted to be vaccinated. It also got Bonnie and Fran thinking about the many African American seniors they knew who hadn't been vaccinated.

Read the full story on how Francine and Bonnie helped make the COVID-19 vaccine a reality for seniors and how our own Beverly Watts Davis contributed to their mission, [click here!](#)



Read more online



WestCare Texas

Educating the Public and Creating New Connections

By Yolanda Gonzalez Malave, Program Assistant & HR Coordinator

April was Sexual Assault Awareness Month. As part of our team with **The Village - Virgin Islands Partners in Recovery (VIPIR)** collaborated with the Virgin Islands **Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Council (DVSAC)** for their recent community health and awareness fair. We were able to provide attendees with information on our treatment and prevention programs as well as network with other agencies and community organizations that were on hand.



Follow along for more



The Village - VI Partners in Recovery Inc / WestCare

Joining Together To Help Our Nation's Veterans

By Donald Lachman, Special Projects Coordinator, and Andrea Talmadge, Regional Coordinator



WestCare WA/WAServes has had the privilege of assisting **Dan**, a local Veteran, as he advances his reintegration into the community by obtaining permanent housing. Dan has faced significant social and financial challenges in 2021. However, he has also been assisted by what we refer to as "the best in people" individuals, who, no matter what their background is - share a common desire to help our nation's Veterans!

Dan is establishing himself as a respected teacher and dog trainer locally and across the great state of Washington. It seems that wherever he appears in his new hometown of Bellingham, Washington, people are drawn to him. Without regard to ethnicity, age, or status, a great number of people are eager to stop Dan to have a conversation. They always request an introduction to his special partner, a young candidate for **Brigadoon Service Dogs**, easily

identified by the familiar training vest that sports the organization's distinctive logo.

This occurs so frequently that Dan can observe a person's growing interest even at a distance as they walk towards each other. While still separated by many yards, he observes their faces break into wide grins and warm smiles. Their eyes are drawn towards a furry bundle of energy at the end of the leash he holds in his hands.

Dan's career as an accomplished dog trainer was professionally launched during his service in the U.S. Air Force as a specialized dog handler. His training skills continued their development when Dan joined other volunteers as a member of a select training program hosted by Brigadoon Service Dogs.

Before acceptance, each volunteer dog trainer completed rigorous interviews and background checks. While in the program, they must regularly demonstrate their ability to take directions, accept criticism, overcome communication barriers, follow specific training schedules and achieve training performance metrics. All of these activities are conducted under the watchful eyes of the Founder/Executive Director of Brigadoon, Denise Costanten.

Dan's outreach and impact are not just limited to the community. As the Coordinator for Brigadoon's five prison-based service dog training programs, he regularly provides technical support and guidance to his program colleagues at the **Washington State Department of Corrections (DOC)**.

The unit sergeant and DOC staff respect his experience, professionalism and commitment to excellence. His volunteer trainers know they are advancing a critical phase of dog training and Dan is there for them. Their success is his success!

During a recent site visit, staff at **Stafford Creek Corrections Center (SCCC)** congratulated Dan on his recent one-year anniversary and his various achievements. They expressed pride in his professionalism, personal character as well as his impact as a model of positive growth for justice-involved Veterans. He accepted this compliment with great pride. Only fourteen months before, these staff members were his jailers before his release from thirteen years of incarceration with the DOC.





The 4th Annual MKE Harambee Clean Up

By Felicia Williams, LST Program Director

When we joined together in 2020 to clean up the Harambee area due to rioting and property destruction over the death of George Floyd, something amazing happened. Over 2,500 people from all over the city of Milwaukee and its neighboring suburbs rolled up their sleeves and put on their walking shoes to help clean the devastation that was left behind. The neighborhoods were looking and feeling full of despair and WestCare Wisconsin and other collaborating agencies wanted to bring a little hope. Each agency worked with families to do mini-block cleanups while following safety guidelines during the pandemic. The agencies took names and addresses for 'ghost deliveries,' a friendly 'ding dong ditch' of generosity, per se. We masked and gloved up to deliver supplies on the porches of those who were interested and by doing this, we were still able to make a difference in Uplifting the Human Spirit.

In commemoration of Earth Day, **WestCare Wisconsin** joined Harambee residents and other community partners for our **4th Annual MKE Harambee Clean Up!** Our residents and the businesses that reside in this area love where they live and work and that love was truly shown! What makes this collaboration so amazing? The agencies who tirelessly planned to pull it off, which consisted of Keeping Greater Milwaukee Beautiful (KGMB), Safe & Sound Inc., Riverworks, Bader Philanthropies, District 6 - Alderwoman Milele A. Coggs, Northcott Neighborhood House, Milwaukee's District 5 Police Department, King Drive Business Improvement District (BID #8), Running Rebels, Colliers Training Institute and of course, WestCare Wisconsin! With all of the hard work and effort combined, we had over 250 participants to help clean the one hundred and sixty blocks that encompass the community of Harambee. It was a job and effort well done.

HARAMBEE = COMING TOGETHER.



Get involved with Wisconsin



WestCare Wisconsin



@westcare.wi

Sending Kudos to Our Teams!



I'd like to give a shout out to **Katie Tkac**, Vocational Specialist here at MLK Residential, who really deserves the extra recognition! I witnessed Katie step into a situation with a female client who was debating walking away from treatment and was struggling in many ways. It was then that she stepped up and assisted this client with her laundry, cleaning up her room and providing an ear to listen. I was truly amazed and inspired by such a kind gesture and presented her with a staff recognition token. Thank you, Katie!

- **Tracy Herrera, Counselor, MLK Residential, WestCare California**



This month, we're giving extra kudos to our **Senior Services** team for maintaining their continued participation rate in our Aging Mastery Program with thirty graduates and counting! Additionally, our senior outreach case manager found success early last month assisting several seniors with scheduling, being transported to, and getting their COVID-19 vaccines. This team member has continued to provide support to clients who are unsure about getting the vaccine or are in search of more information about their options. On May 7th, they were proud to host a free COVID-19 vaccination clinic of their own!

- **By Abby Hofrichter, Communications and Social Media Coordinator, Hofrichter Creative LLC, on behalf of East End Community Services**



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2. Enter plan number **81F805**
3. Enter verification code **81F80599**

Be sure to review the disclosures in the "**Important Information**" section during online enrollment.

Enroll by Phone

Call **1-888-311-9487**
Monday - Friday, 8 AM - 9PM ET

Please note: If you choose to enroll by phone, you will be asked to verify you have reviewed the enrollment booklet with plan information.

For more information, please email benefits@westcare.com

For financial
advising, contact



Call: 702-732-9226
Email: Albert@GM-FC.com



Juneteenth: Why WestCare Now Honors This Important Day

By WestCare's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Staff Workgroup

Last year, the senseless acts of violence against black and brown individuals woke the world and spurred new conversations about systemic racism and social privilege. At a time when we were physically and metaphorically locked down in a pandemic, attention on the Black Lives Matter (BLM) movement made it impossible to ignore the multi-generational and multi-racial crusade for justice and equality erupting throughout our nation.

Like many organizations, WestCare answered the call to action by establishing the [National Board of Directors' Diversity and Inclusion Committee](#) and the [WestCare Diversity, Equity and Inclusion \(DEI\) Staff Workgroup](#). In addition, senior leadership started an open and honest dialogue about our organization's commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion. Based upon suggestions by employees, WestCare's Board of Directors and Senior Leadership Team, led by CEO/President Richard Steinberg, unanimously agreed to make **Juneteenth** an official paid holiday for employees.

Juneteenth (A blending of the words June and nineteenth) does not commemorate the end of slavery with the signing of the Emancipation Proclamation in 1863, but rather, it marks the moment in 1865 when news of the emancipation finally reached individuals who were still enslaved in the deepest and most rural parts of the former Confederacy.

This year, since Juneteenth falls on a Saturday, WestCare staff will celebrate it on Friday, June 18, 2021, as a paid holiday for staff in observance of Juneteenth. This month, our DEI Staff Workgroup will coordinate special activities and events to celebrate the holiday throughout our organization. The goal is to build on these activities each year, making Juneteenth a highly anticipated annual day of remembrance and service throughout our organization.

It has been 156 years since Union General, Gordon Granger, arrived in Galveston, Texas with news of freedom. Yet, for black and brown people in our nation, many of our most fundamental conversations about human rights remain the same, with many of the same battles for justice still being fought.

This month, let us celebrate Juneteenth and the freedom that was won by asking:

How can we listen to and support each other in our differences?

How can we create a safer and more just world for us all?

Grants & Resource Development



The National Grant Management Association (NGMA)

By Maryellen Pistalu, MS., *Grants Development Officer*

Throughout the past decade, grant writers in the United States have sustained their efforts to distinguish, elevate, standardize and formalize the training and professional status of their peers. Among the organizations at the forefront of such efforts is the National Grant Management Association (NGMA).

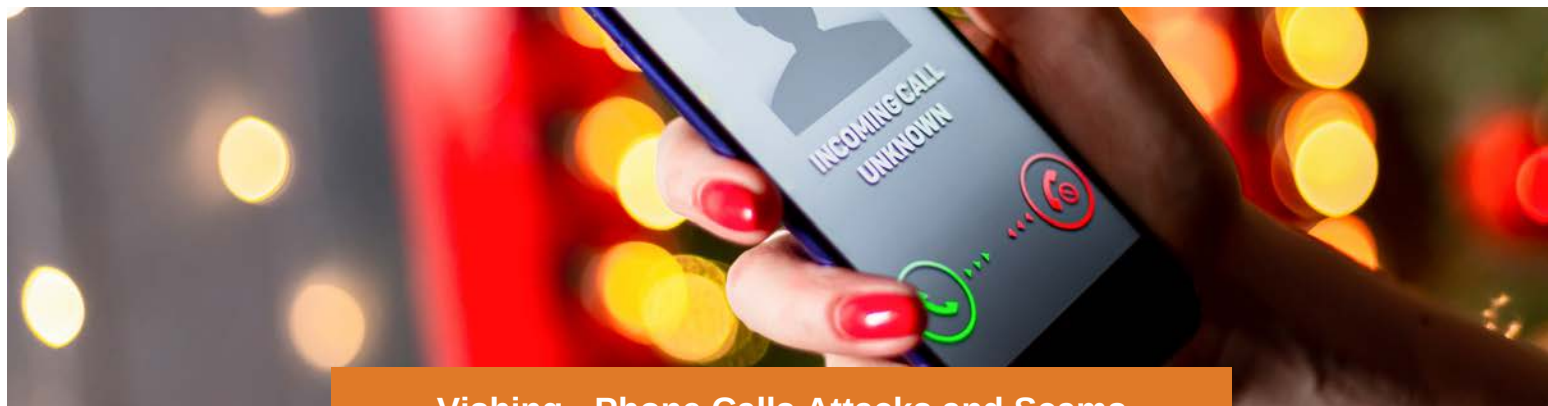
Hi! My name is Maryellen and I have been a part of the WestCare Family since 2007. I started my career with WestCare in California as their Director of Research and Grant Development. I have served in several positions over the years including Program Director and the Director of Contract Compliance. I am currently a part of the WestCare Foundation Grants Department and would like to share with you a little about the standardization, formalization, training, and professionalization of grant writing.

What I have learned is that most grant writers did not expect to be doing this. They did not train as grant writers and did not wake up one morning and say to themselves that their life's ambition was to write grants. In most cases, they came to grant writing out of necessity. Someone needed to do it and they were the ones that ended up with the grant writing task.

I chose to join the NGMA because the membership provides resources for grant professionals and practitioners to support high levels of competency and standards of excellence beyond the practice of grant writing. NGMA represents and supports the needs of all grant management professionals and stakeholders, encourages professional development and also offers certification opportunities. NGMA's standards advance effective grant stewardship and promote the value of effective grant management to grantor and grantee organizations.

For more information on the NGMA, please visit: ngma.org

Information Technology



Vishing - Phone Calls Attacks and Scams

Adapted from the [May 2021 Issue of the OUCH! Newsletter](#)

When you think of a cybercriminal you probably think of an evil mastermind sitting behind a computer, launching sophisticated attacks over the internet. While some of today's cybercriminals do use advanced technologies, many simply use the phone to trick their victims. There are two big advantages to using a phone: Unlike other attacks, there are fewer security technologies that can detect and stop a phone call attack; also, it is much easier for criminals to convey emotion and build trust over the phone, which makes it easier to trick their victims. Let's learn how to spot and stop these attacks.

How Do Phone Call Attacks Work?

First, understand that these criminals are usually after your money, information, or access to your computer (or all three). They do this by tricking you into doing something you should not do, a technique called "social engineering." Cybercriminals often create situations that feel very urgent and realistic on the call. Some of the most common examples include:

- The caller pretends they are from the government and informs you that you have unpaid taxes. They explain that if you don't pay your taxes right away you will go to jail, then pressure you to pay your taxes with your credit card over the phone. This is a scam. The government will send official tax notifications only by regular mail.
- The caller pretends to be from a company such as Amazon, Apple, or Microsoft Tech Support and explains that your computer is infected. Once they convince you that your computer is infected, they pressure you into buying their software or giving them remote access to your computer.
- An automated voicemail informs you that your bank account or credit card has been canceled, and you have to call a number back to reactivate it. When you call, you get an automated system that asks you to confirm your identity as well as all sorts of private questions. This is really not your bank. They are simply recording all your information for identity fraud.

Protecting Yourself

The greatest defense you have against a phone call attack is yourself. Keep these things in mind:

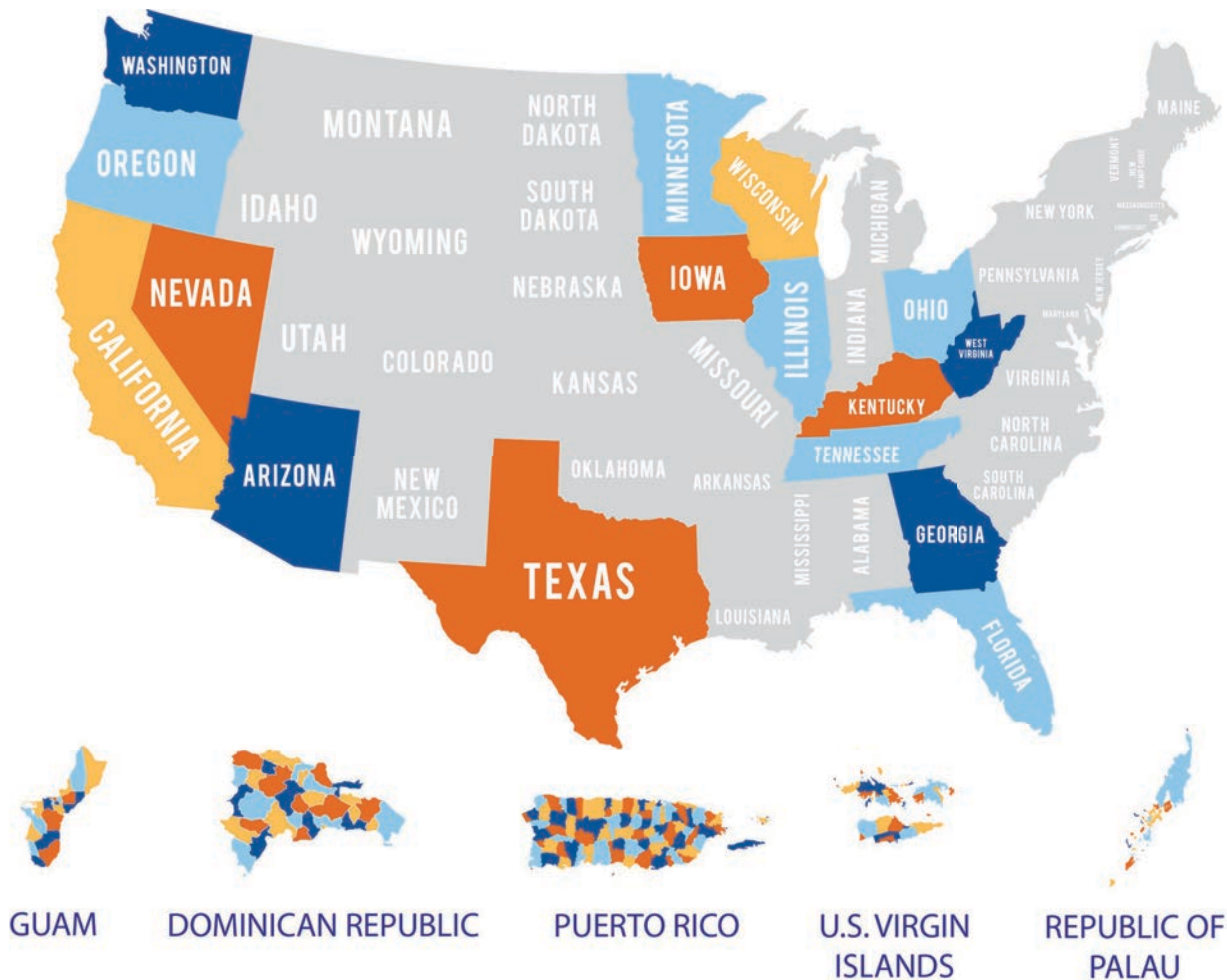
- Anytime anyone calls you and creates a tremendous sense of urgency or pressure, be extremely suspicious. They are attempting to rush you into making a mistake. Even if the phone call seems OK at first, if it starts to feel strange, you can stop and say "no" at any time.
- Be especially wary of callers who insist that you purchase gift cards or prepaid debit cards.
- Never trust Caller ID. Bad guys will often spoof the number, so it looks like it is coming from a legitimate organization or has the same area code as your phone number.
- Never allow a caller to take temporary control of your computer or trick you into downloading software. This is how they can infect your computer.
- Unless you placed the call, never give the other party information that they should already have. For example, if the bank called you, they shouldn't be asking for your account number.
- If you believe a phone call is an attack, simply hang up. If you want to confirm that the phone call was legitimate, go to the organization's website (such as your bank) and call the customer support phone number directly yourself. That way, you really know you are talking to the real organization.
- If a phone call is coming from someone you do not personally know, let the call go directly to voicemail. This way you can review unknown calls on your own time. Even better, on many phones, you can enable this by default with the "Do Not Disturb" feature.

Scams and attacks over the phone are on the rise. You are the best defense at detecting and stopping them.

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WestCare, a family of tax-exempt nonprofit organizations founded in 1973, provides a wide spectrum of behavioral health and human services in both residential and outpatient environments. Our service domains include Treatment and Rehabilitation, Mental Health, Veterans Services, Criminal Justice, Housing Opportunities, Education, Prevention, and support for those fleeing Domestic Violence. These services are available to adults, children, adolescents, and families. We specialize in helping people traditionally considered difficult to treat, such as those who are indigent, have multiple disorders, or are involved with the criminal justice system.

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Creative Services Manager



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