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WESTCARE EXPRESS

NOVEMBER 2020

THE WESTCARE EXPRESS NEWSLETTER

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A Welcome by our President/CEO, Dick Steinberg



Dick Steinberg

“WestCare Family,

Welcome to WestCare’s National Newsletter, **The WestCare Express!** With the Thanksgiving holiday behind us and December fast approaching, I’d like to start off by wishing you and your family a very happy holiday season! As we wrap up a year that has truly been unlike any other, I’d like to

emphasize my appreciation for all of our staff who day in and day out and despite uncertain conditions, have continued to help change thousands of lives worldwide through the multitude of programs and services that we are so fortunate to offer!

To those that we serve, thank you for choosing WestCare. We understand that this time of the year can be a difficult one for so many, including those who are in the process of rewriting the current chapter in their life for a brand one. But, please know that we will be here for you, through the good times and the bad and will be helping celebrate every success of yours along the way!

In closing, thank you. From our states to our territories to the republics that we serve, we do amazing work that is absolutely necessary to our communities.

Little by little, we are all helping make this world a better place.

I hope that you not only enjoy, but cherish any time that you take off and do so safely. May you all have an amazing holiday season!”

Thank you,
Richard “Dick” Steinberg
President & CEO

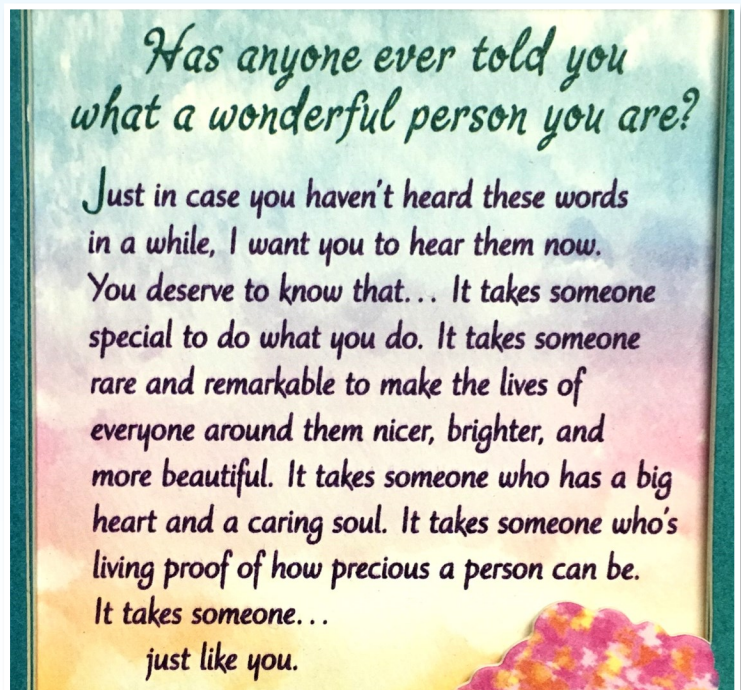
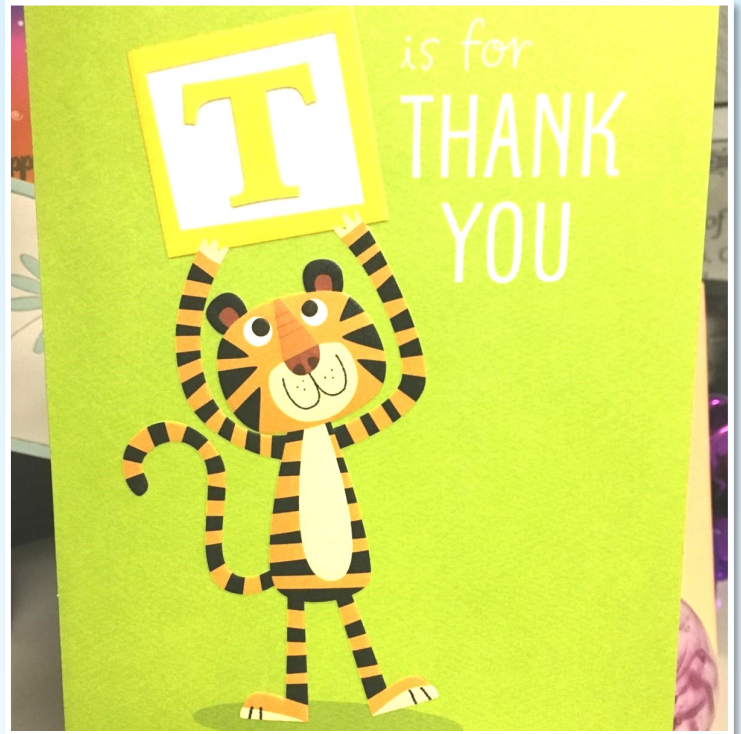




ARIZONA: "Giving Thanks"

By Emily Selby, Case Manager/BHT, WestCare Arizona

"As we roll into Thanksgiving, we would like to take an opportunity to share some of our thanks from giving. As counselors, we feel it is up to us to guide our clients out of the darkness and into a world that allows them to achieve their dreams and aspirations. As our clients come and go and rise and fall, we watch them fulfill a journey that at one time was unimaginable. When clients have moved on or completed programs, sometimes, they return with a simple 'Thank you.' Hearing these words warms our hearts and lets us know that we have done our job by simply Uplifting the Human Spirit. We keep these cards that we've received from them to remember our clients and as a reminder of just how powerful recovery really is!"





CALIFORNIA: "Giving Thanks to Our Heroes"

*By Michael Mygind, Marketing Specialist,
WestCare California*

"In honor of Veterans Day, our San Joaquin Valley Veterans (SJVV) staff in Fresno created special 'Thank you' boards as a way to show appreciation for all of the Veterans that SJVV proudly serves. These were hand delivered along with gift cards and cupcakes to the men, women and families of our grant per diem (GPD) transitional living programs at Veterans Plaza and HomeFront, the residents of the Renaissance at Parc Grove complex and our Vets who are currently staying in motels. On behalf of our staff, we'd like to thank all who have served for our country! We will forever be indebted for your service, sacrifice and selflessness."





DOMINICAN REPUBLIC: “Guara Bi DR Receives the Gift of Sports”

*By Yolanda Gonzalezmalave, Program Assistant,
Caribbean and Latin American Region*

“We and our clients at our **Guara Bi** program in the Dominican Republic are very happy that the **Ministry of Sports of the Dominican Republic** granted our program a donation of sports equipment to be installed in our facility. We received a new basketball hoop with basketballs and a brand new ping pong table with all accessories. Our program serves 15 clients from nearby

communities. Research suggests that incorporating regular exercise into an addiction treatment program significantly boosts the chances of recovery. Thanks to this donation, our clients can experience sports therapy, which can be a very effective way to heal emotional and cognitive issues and will give them a sense of accomplishment and improve their confidence to stay clean and sober.”





FLORIDA - Florida Keys: “National Suicide Prevention Month”

*By Maureen Dunleavy, LMHC, Regional Vice President,
WestCare Florida - Guidance/Care Center*

“September was National Suicide Prevention Awareness Month with National Suicide Prevention Week from September 6th - 12th and World Suicide Prevention Day on the 10th. Suicide Prevention is an ongoing issue in the Florida Keys. To assist in raising awareness, the Florida Department of Health in Monroe County in partnership with the Guidance/Care Center, the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention and Key West Commissioner, Mary Lou Hoover have continued to bring attention to this issue.

In the Florida Keys, there is a higher rate of suicide when compared to other counties in Florida. Suicide currently ranks as the second leading cause of death for those between the ages of 10 and 24. It is also among the leading causes of preventable death in the United States.

Our biggest focus right now due to COVID-19 is to raise awareness and resolve fears. Help is available even for those who cannot pay for it. Suicide is preventable if we can connect

ourselves and others to professional help. Losing one more life in Monroe County is one too many. But, this goal is not hopeless.

There are five action steps for communicating with someone who may be suicidal, that is to: 1.) Ask, 2.) Be There, 3.) Keep them Safe, 4.) Help them Connect and 5.) Follow Up. According to the CDC, there is no single cause of suicide. Several factors can increase a person’s risk of attempting or dying by suicide. However, having these risk factors does not always mean that suicide will occur. Risk factors for suicide include:

- *Previous suicide attempts*
- *History of depression or other mental illness*
- *Alcohol or drug abuse*
- *Family history of suicide or violence*
- *Physical illness*
- *Feeling alone*

The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline’s toll-free number can be reached by calling 1-800-273-8255. A text can also be sent to 741741 to connect with a Crisis Counselor.”





FLORIDA - South Florida: *"The Village South Holds a Halloween Door Decorating Contest"*

*By Beatriz Del Rio, Marketing Director,
WestCare Florida – The Village South*

"While dealing with a worldwide pandemic, at **The Village South**, we strive to keep a sense of normalcy for our clients. For Halloween, we held a door decorating contest. Clients decorated their individual doors for a chance to win 1st, 2nd, or 3rd place prizes. With the assistance of one of our babysitting staff, **April Jackson**, they gathered all materials and supplies needed to decorate. They were very creative and did a great job dressing up their doors!

Our Human Resources Director, **Diana Alvarea** and Human Resources Coordinator, **Nazneen Khatib** served as judges and selected the winners. Each winner received an Amazon gift card. This event was not only fun for clients and staff, but it brought happiness and a sense of normalcy during these uncertain times. To further celebrate the Halloween spirit, our children that we serve dressed up in costumes!"





GEORGIA: "WestCare Youth Academy: Promoting From Within"

By Kendra Webb-Muhammad, LPC, NCC, CPCS;
Program Director, WestCare Georgia

"The WestCare Youth Academy is promoting from within! These staff members have embodied the WestCare mission and their passion helps build a stronger foundation for the youth that we serve. We are thrilled to announce their achievements and we wish them well in their new positions. Congratulations!



Dakari Parker:
From Lead Behavioral Health Technician to Program Supervisor

Mr. Parker graduated from the University of West Georgia with a bachelor's degree in

Business Administration. He promptly began working at a residential treatment facility for at risk youth struggling with mental health disorders and substance addiction. Mr. Parker's goal is to provide an opportunity for today's youth to have a promising future. He was determined to utilize his supervision skills and he progressively elevated his position at the youth academy to Program Supervisor. Dakari currently supervises eight behavioral health technicians and three lead behavioral health technicians. In his spare time, he enjoys spending time with his daughter.



Terrance Drayton
From Recreational Specialist to Program Specialist

Mr. Drayton graduated from Benedict College in Columbia, South Carolina with a bachelor's degree in Fine Arts and a double minor in Education and Psychology. His passion for working with youth started at the early age of 12 teaching Sunday school. Mr. Drayton's journey with WestCare started as a youth counselor at WestCare Boggs, before he progressed to a Recreation Specialist and now to a Program Specialist! Terrance also serves as the WestCare Georgia trainer for Nonviolent Crisis Intervention. His goal is to serve others. In his spare time, he enjoys painting murals, illustrating books and working as a certified fitness instructor.



Dequana Ellis
From Behavioral Health Technician to Lead Behavioral Health Technician

Ms. Dequana graduated from Jacksonville State University in 2011 and 2014. She has worked with youth for most of her adult life and specializes in child development with a focus on behavioral disabilities. Dequana joined the WestCare Youth Academy in January 2017 as a behavioral health technician and her determination has resulted in a promotion to Lead Behavioral Health Technician. In her free time, she is working on developing an organic skincare line.

From all of the staff at the Youth Academy, we would like to congratulate you all on your accomplishments. Keep up the good work, heroes!





ILLINOIS: *“WestCare Illinois Gives Thanks To Those That They Serve and Bids Farewell to Project RISE”*

By Grace Cronin, Creative Services Manager, WestCare Illinois

“On November 16th, WestCare Illinois kicked off the holiday season by participating in the **Annual Thanksgiving Celebration and Food Drive**, hosted by one of our SAMHSA grant partners, **Fathers Who Care and Westside Community Stakeholders**. The event took place at Michele Clark High School in Chicago, providing fresh turkeys, hams and other goods in an effort to better support our Westside communities.

Fathers Who Care and Westside Community Stakeholders work to end substance abuse and violence experienced by our youths by bringing people together and enhancing the lives of neighborhoods that have been disproportionately impacted by poverty. For years, they’ve improved the quality of life throughout our communities, making it an honor for WestCare Illinois to aid in their efforts. Special applause goes to **Carlos Rodriguez**, our new Program Director for the SAMHSA Prevention grant, who played a pivotal role in representing the WestCare Illinois family and contributed to the major success of this event. Through their collaborative work, hundreds of families were provided with the means to give thanks to their loved ones as well as enhance

WestCare’s involvement with our valued stakeholders as we head towards a new year.

The Annual Thanksgiving Celebration and Food Drive marked the beginning of a new Illinois youth services initiative to better our communities, preceded by the legacy of WestCare’s former initiative, **Project RISE (Restoring Individuals through Supportive Environments)**. Since May 2017, Project RISE has provided intensive group counseling, mentoring and skill-building for justice-involved youth. WestCare’s **James Peek Jr.** spearheaded this initiative, helping our youths identify their barriers and develop tactics to overcome them. By utilizing community resources, Project RISE has helped our youth understand the importance of responsibility, giving back to their communities and building confidence in themselves. Though the Project RISE initiative will come to an end this December, its impact in our communities will not be forgotten. Through the SAMHSA Prevention grant, WestCare is able to carry on with the incredible work done by James Peek Jr. and Project RISE and continue to support the youth that we serve in hopes for a better future.”





IOWA: "Generosity Comes in Two's at FAVA!"

By Barb Ruiter, Data Entry/Receptionist,
WestCare Iowa/ FAVA



"WestCare Iowa / FAVA had a very special day on November 3, 2020, despite the world being in a pandemic. **The Pilot Knob Lutheran Church** called and said that they had several handmade quilts and that they could bring them to us. They brought in two bags filled with beautiful quilts. Each one has a counted cross stitch label from the Pilot Knob Lutheran Church and a bible verse cross stitched on it. Just the label takes hours to complete, let alone the hours to make each quilt!

Here in the heartland of the country and state, we have many clubs and church groups getting together to quilt. They have coffee, cookies or some homemade pastries that one of the quilters has signed up to make. They bring their portable sewing machines, needles, thread and fabric and have a great time sewing and chatting!

You can feel the love, care and concern for our Veterans with every stitch that they make!

Our program is given eight to 12 quilts a year from about eight groups, so we always have an abundance to give out. We give them all away however and in some cases, as many as seven quilts if it's a family with five children. It's the greatest gift to have these quilts available to help our Veterans and their families.

We are blessed that this Church has adopted our program. We appreciate all your hard work and know that you do make a difference to those we serve

Also on this day...

A check for \$750 was presented to FAVA by **Jeremiah Ulferts**, a Veteran, who gave the money for our Veterans. 'From one Veteran to another,' he said. In the past, Jeremiah has donated checks a couple of other times to our program. He was accompanied by **Jason Gerdes**, also an employee of **Christensen Farms and Feedlots**.

Thank you, Christensen Farms and Feedlots from Sleepy Eye, Minnesota!

We love all donations, but when they come two in the same day, it makes the day seem extra special!"





KENTUCKY: “WestCare Kentucky Opens Women’s Treatment Facility”

By Jeremie Delauder, MAT Research Assistant,
WestCare Kentucky



“With a project several years in the making, WestCare Kentucky is

proud to announce that it is expanding its substance abuse programs with the opening of a new facility, located at 5971 Poorbottom Road, in the Pike County community of Lookout, Kentucky. Initial staffing will provide 15 jobs to the community.

The WestCare Kentucky Center For Healthy Families will provide residential substance abuse treatment primarily for women involved in the state’s correctional system thanks to a contract with Kentucky Department of Corrections. The facility will also accept referrals for female clients from **Operation Unlawful Narcotics Investigations, Treatment and Education (UNITE)** located in 36 eastern counties of Kentucky, as well as the **Kentucky State Police’s Angel Initiative**.

Covering nearly 28,000 square feet, the facility is approved to accommodate 112 clients. The facility also includes one large common area along with four smaller common areas that can also be used as classrooms. The spacious cafeteria and stage areas will also be used for whole-house groups as needed. Dedicated areas for Counselor Technician observation, intake processing, a nurse’s station and a medication room provide needed room for ancillary services covering client needs. The administration area consists of six separate offices and a large conference room.

Recreational activities at the center include a walking track, basketball and volleyball courts, cornhole, board games, Zumba and arts and crafts. They also have relationships with volunteer speakers covering topics such as ‘Professional Presentation: Appropriate Attire, Hair and Nails in the Workplace’ and voluntary spiritual services.

Programming will include Correction Counseling, Inc.’s (CCI):

- “Moral Reconciliation Therapy”
- “Untangling Relationships”
- “Parenting and Family Values”
- “Thinking For Good”
- “Staying Quit”

Other evidence-based courses will include Hazelden’s:

- “Introduction to Treatment”
- “Alcohol and Other Drug Education”
- “Co-Occurring Disorders”
- “Criminal and Addictive Thinking”
- “Socialization”
- “Relapse Prevention”
- “Preparing for Release”

Additional programming includes AA/NA and peer support groups, individual/group counseling, food and nutrition education, suicide education/prevention, trauma informed care and employment services. In addition, domestic violence education, services and resources are offered in collaboration with Turning Point Domestic Violence Services.

With the current pandemic, licensures and certifications have been a slow process. However, our center now has its licensures from both the **Alcohol and Other Drug Entity (AODE)** and the **Office of Inspector General (OIG)**. Program Director, **Dr. Tiffany Slone**, looks forward to accepting the facility’s first clients in December.”





NEVADA: “The Summit Center’s Grand Opening & Ribbon Cutting Ceremony”

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

“In an effort to address the issues that plague the homeless population in Southern Nevada, a partnership between **WestCare Nevada** and **SilverSummit HealthPlan** kicked off with a grand opening ribbon cutting ceremony for the **Summit Center**. This new program provides behavioral health services to HealthPlan members at **WestCare’s Community Involvement/Community Triage Centers**. The center offers many services including therapeutic services, case management, peer support, employment and vital document assistance, as well as access to computers, free meals, showers,

laundry facilities, clothing and hygiene items and transportation to and from the city’s homeless shelters.

In attendance was Las Vegas City Councilwoman, Olivia Diaz, State Assemblywoman, Rochelle Nguyen, Las Vegas Chamber of Commerce Representative, Sallie Doebler, SilverSummit HealthPlan President and CEO, Eric Schmacker, SilverSummit HealthPlan Chief Medical Director, Dr. Jeff Murawsky, WestCare Chief Clinical Officer, Dr. Jason Engel and WestCare Nevada Vice President of Operations, Leo Magrdichian.

The center is open seven days a week and is currently able to assist up to 40 individuals per day.”





OHIO: "The Senior Prevention Program Promotes Empowerment and Independence"

By Nanci McGuire, Program Coordinator,
Senior Prevention Program/WestCare Ohio



"Last month, our **Senior Prevention Program** launched its second **Aging Master Program (AMP)**. This program consisted of

10 sessions covered over six days that were full of fun and energy

to provide skills for another 1 - 20 years of healthy living. Sessions covered everything from incorporating Tai-chi, meditation and balance exercises into daily routines, eating and sleeping better, managing medications and finances, cultivating healthy relationships, planning ahead for possible sickness and becoming active in one's community. This session was comprised of seven women, all of whom graduated the program in early November. They said that they would miss these classes and are looking forward to our upcoming activities!"



OHIO: "The Miracle Makers Team Keeps Virtual Learning Fun!"

By Suzzy Nandras, Program Manager,
Miracle Makers/WestCare Ohio

"For our younger community members, our **Miracle Makers** team has been incredibly flexible and creative this fall to serve our 65 virtual Pre K - 6th grade students in the afterschool program. Through online tools like Kahoot, Jam Board and various Google platform features, our Miracle Makers have been able to maintain personal, engaging and enriching afterschool experiences for our kids. For example, the 5th and 6th grade class loved listening to their teacher, Ms. Sara, read 'Harry Potter' to them live instead of through recordings. They were more engaged in the book and were able to have more meaningful conversations in real time. So, she changed her curriculum delivery to include more live reading. She also built a clever presentation that functioned like an

interactive Hogwarts map to review questions about the book. Another teacher, Ms. Autumn, taught students about her culture and showed traditional dances to celebrate Indigenous Peoples' Day. Overall, our team has been pleasantly surprised at how well the students are engaged in virtual programming and how effectively we've been able to support their families during this time."





OREGON: "Honoring Heroes Honors OUR Heroes"

By Nancy Pine, VETcare Program Case Manager,
WestCare Oregon/VETcare Transitional Program

"The VETcare Transitional Program in Salem, Oregon has many community partners, but there is one partner in particular that stands out. **Honoring Heroes** is a local non-profit that has done countless acts of kindness for our transitioning Veterans. They have been serving our community since 2009. Their mission statement is: 'Honoring Heroes is a non-profit organization dedicated to assisting United States Veterans and active duty military.' Their Chairman, **Mark Buchholz**, a retired Air Force Veteran says the vision of Honoring Heroes is to, 'Offer a hand-up, not a hand-out.'

Honoring Heroes has supported VETcare in various ways. During the holidays, they have been gracious enough to give each resident a \$50 gift card to Amazon to buy anything they desire or need (*with a few exceptions of course*). In addition to that, they have assisted with rent and utility payments for Veterans who are struggling to make ends meet. They have also helped our Veterans

by finding, donating and delivering furniture once they have a place of their own. Our Veterans who are training for new jobs get help from them by receiving donations of any clothing or equipment that they may need to be successful in their new careers. A recent VETcare client who was trained in welding, received his personal welding equipment as well as clothing needed to perform his job properly and safely. This Veteran now has a full-time welding position and is looking to transition out of our center, partly due to the help of Honoring Heroes.

In addition to helping the Veterans in our community, they also help our active duty service members. Just one way that they have shown them support is by providing care packages to those that are serving overseas. To date, they have provided more than 1,000 packages to our brave service members around the world! These packages include everything from candy to food to DVD's and more.

If you want to learn more about Honoring Heroes, you can visit their website at: <http://www.HonoringHeroes.US>"

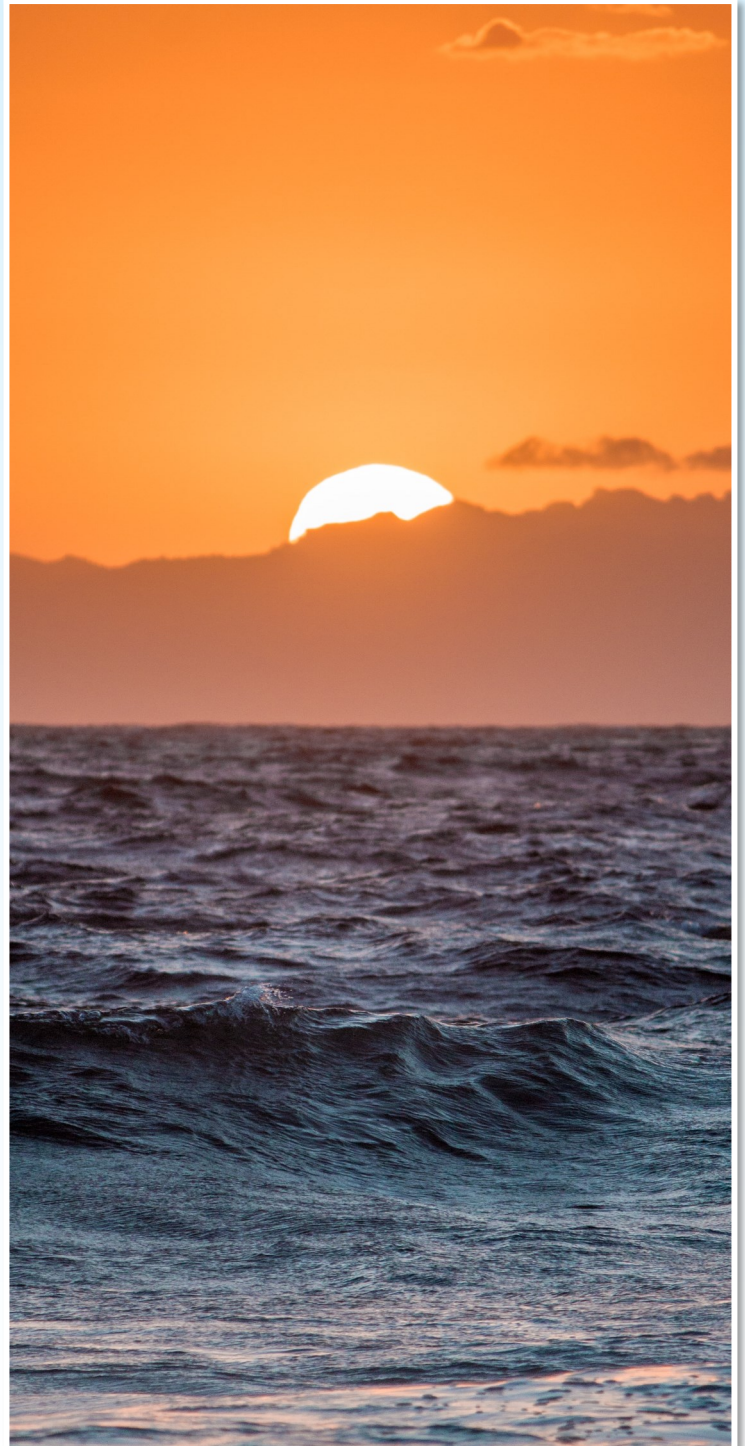


*By Lavina Camacho, Behavioral Health Administrator,
Uplift Counseling Services/WestCare Pacific Islands*



“WestCare Pacific Islands’ Uplift Outpatient Counseling Services program is staffed by licensed behavioral health and substance use treatment counselors. Utilizing evidence-based models infused with cultural values of Inafa’maolek: the CHamoru concept of restoring harmony or order to make good, Familia: family and Respetu: respect, we build upon one’s strengths and resiliency.

Initially, counseling services were limited to individuals with private insurance and to those referred through the U.S. District Court. Recognizing that more needed to be done, Uplift embarked on an initiative made possible by a grant from the **Guam Economic Development Authority (GEDA)**. As a result, formal linkages were formed to deliver brief counseling support to a vulnerable population on our island who are underinsured or uninsured. In addition, we’ve developed a collaborative partnership with Guam’s state behavioral health agency, **Guam Behavioral Health and Wellness Center (GBHWC)** and more recently, partnered with the **University of Guam, Unibetsedât Guåhan**, to provide counseling to young adults pursuing higher education.”





PUERTO RICO: “Guara Bi Yocahu Lends Some Birthday Positivity”

*By Yolanda Gonzalezmalave, Program Assistant,
Caribbean and Latin American Region*

“COVID-19 has changed many lives including those of our young ones. At **Guara Bi Yocahú**, a housing program for COVID-19 positive clients, Luis, our youngest client, just turned 14 years old and all of our staff celebrated his birthday. At the time of blowing the candle, his only wish was to be able to share time with his mother, brother and

friends. We weren’t able to grant his desire to celebrate with all of his friends, but we gave him a new family and assured him that we will take care of his brother and mother until they get better and beat COVID-19.

Being a part of this moment helped reaffirm our commitment to continue offering quality services with empathy to all people who need it - especially those affected directly by this pandemic.”



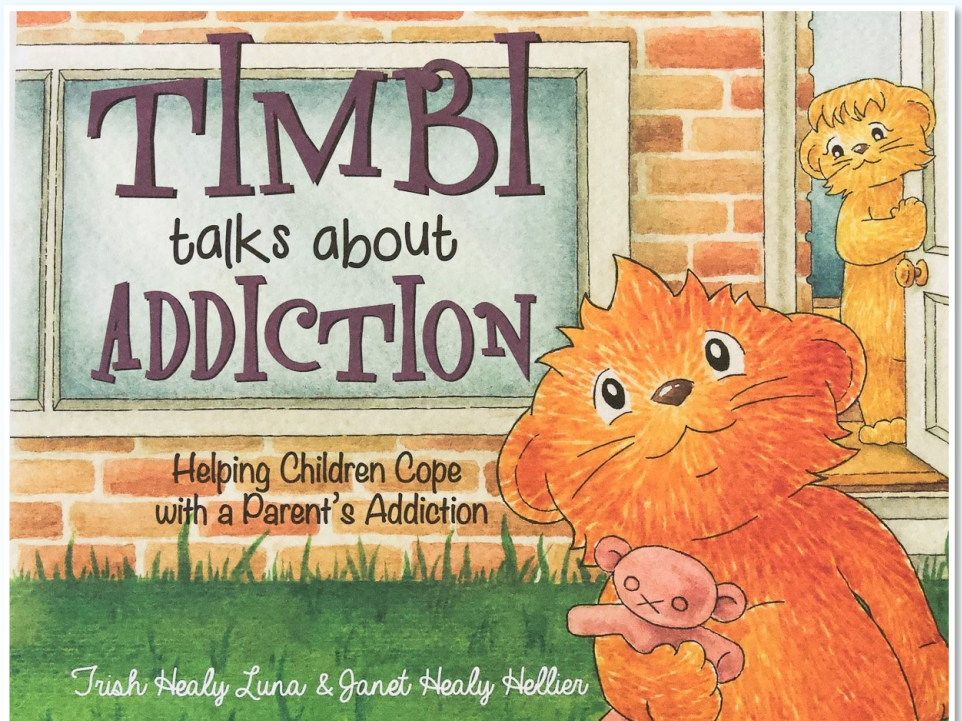
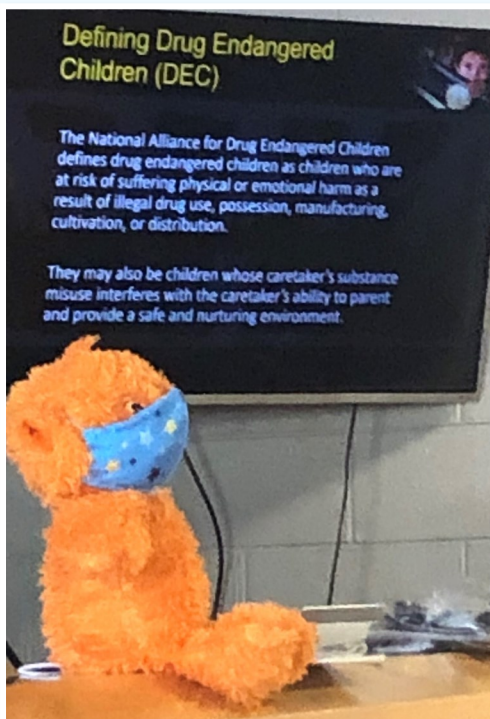
TENNESSEE: “Timbi Talks About Addiction”

By Janice Church, Program Coordinator,
WestCare Tennessee

“In late October, the State Director of Drug Endangered Children (DEC), **Tabatha Curtis** conducted a training in Cocke County. **The National Alliance for Drug Endangered Children** defines drug endangered children as those who are at risk of suffering physical or emotional harm as a direct result of a caretaker’s illegal drug use, possession, manufacturing/cultivation or distribution. Along with this, a caretaker’s misuse can also affect their ability to be a parent and provide a safe and nurturing environment. Many local officials attended the training. Author, **Trish Luna**, also presented that day by reading ‘**Timbi Talks About Addiction**’ virtually to The Boys and Girls Clubs of Cocke and Jefferson County. This is a much needed book for

families and clinicians that tackle the epidemic of addiction and its effects on families. As stated by Ms. Luna, ‘In this book, we address a variety of issues that children with a parent struggling with addiction face. Through the eyes of Timbi, we are able to validate children’s emotions by describing, naming and normalizing them. We also teach them to recognize the body’s responses to chronic stress and difficult feelings. Timbi provides suggestions and recommendations for coping in healthy and life-enhancing ways. Children learn to achieve a much-needed sense of control in their lives through movement, voice and mindful breathing exercises and by seeking help from important and stable adults in their lives.’”

For more information on and to order “*Timbi Talks About Addiction*”, please visit: <https://timbitalks.com>





TEXAS: *“Public Allies Help WestCare Texas Meet Their Community’s Needs During the Pandemic”*

By Linda Papayanopolus, Community Engagement Coordinator, WestCare Texas



“Since the start of the pandemic, **WestCare Texas** has pivoted to meet the overwhelming needs of the community. COVID-19 has only exacerbated existing needs and disparities

in low-income communities of color such as food insecurity, unemployment, housing instability, lack of access to healthcare, underlying health issues, lack of resources to battle against widespread rates of infection and higher rates of COVID-19 illnesses and deaths.

A ray of light through the COVID-19 crisis is the work and support of our **AmeriCorps Public Allies**, who have spent countless hours helping us serve the needs of our community. With their help, we have quickly mobilized to transform our services to meet these emerging local needs. While keeping health and safety our top priority, we increased our outreach efforts and expanded our COVID-19 response efforts.

The Public Allies program is a federal AmeriCorps program hosted locally by **the Alamo Community College District**. It was created in 1993 when President Bill Clinton signed the National and Community Service Trust Act to expand opportunities for Americans to serve their communities by providing public service work with a goal of, ‘helping others and meeting critical needs in the community.’

Each of our Public Allies serve in a full-time 10 month apprenticeship position at WestCare Texas and perform over 1700 hours of service to help us build capacity to expand programs and services in the community. Allies also participate in a rigorous leadership development program and receive extensive training to build their leadership skills, capacity, work ethic and experience. They also receive individual coaching during their apprenticeship to support their professional development. During their term of service, Allies receive a monthly stipend as a living allowance and have access to other benefits such as: health insurance, childcare and training provided by Alamo Community College District. Upon completion of their service, Public Allies receive a Segal AmeriCorps Education

Award equivalent to the amount of a Pell Grant to pay for college, graduate school or to pay back student loans. Allies help support a wide-range of grant program activities such as: mentoring high school students at-risk of not graduating, participating in community-wide resource events to provide information about WestCare Texas’ programs and services, providing education and awareness to youth/young adults about the dangers of underage drinking and substance abuse, working with community providers to prevent HIV/AIDS and organizing the community to reduce and prevent neighborhood crime.

Here are some highlights of our Public Allies’ most recent activities:

- *Launched a weekly Drive-Thru Food Bank which distributes Farmers to Families Food Boxes with locally-sourced food.*
- *Set up and operated our COVID-19 Digital Resource Hub where community members can come and access computers and internet service to apply for COVID-19 relief programs online.*
- *Collaborated with SAGE, a partnered organization, to redesign and host the annual ‘Hallo-East’ event aimed at providing safe alternatives to traditional Halloween activities for children.*
- *Delivered dozens of hot meals to seniors at their homes on a weekly basis while the Community Senior Center remained closed due to COVID-19 safety guidelines.*
- *Filled hundreds of bags with Personal Protection Equipment (PPE), such as face-masks, gloves and bottles of hand sanitizer to distribute at community resource events.*

The AmeriCorps Public Allies program is a dynamic pipeline to build the leadership capacity of individuals from all backgrounds and all parts of the community. Public Allies believe that, ‘Everyone Leads’ and that everyone has talents, abilities and potential to be a leader through the way they live their lives and improve their community.

Through this program, we are able to work with young adults from diverse backgrounds and experiences and help prepare them for careers while making a difference in their communities.”





VIRGIN ISLANDS: "The Village - VIPIR Recognizes Their Newest Graduates!"

By Yolanda Gonzalezmalave, Program Assistant,
Caribbean and Latin American Region



"The Village -
Virgin Islands
Partners in
Recovery
(VIPIR) would
like to
congratulate two
community

members, Tiburcio and Miguel, for completing the program and showing the community that they have evolved - not just by maintaining their sobriety, but with trust and respect. These two clients have shown great potential during the process of their recovery and continue to succeed in their endeavors. For those reasons, we have recognized them in the presence of their

fellow community members and staff. Not only did we exchange words of encouragement, but we awarded both with a certificate, which was presented by our Treatment Director, **Petra Auguste-Warner**, our Deputy Chief Operating Officer, **Cristian Duarte** and our Regional Director, **Marsha Taylor**. During this event, we all celebrated and acknowledged their successes. It has been quite a journey for each client from the moment that they arrived until now. We have appreciated their effort and willingness to recover during their treatment and we will miss them dearly. Both have shown great leadership. The Village VIPIR is very proud and we are all pleased with the results from all the hard work and dedication. On behalf of The Village VIPIR, we wish them both farewell and 'Good luck' on their journey, for they have a prosperous future ahead and we believe in them! Congratulations to all on behalf of our WestCare Family."



VIRGIN ISLANDS: "Beach Day in St. Croix!"

By Yolanda Gonzalezmalave, Program Assistant,
Caribbean and Latin American Region

"We recently treated our clients with a day at the beach where everyone could relax and swim. They truly enjoyed the time spent under the Caribbean sun and cherished the memories made with staff and family members. Everyone was treated with delicious food while relaxing on the sand and enjoyed some great conversations. Each one of our clients felt the love and support that they deserve. After the fun and time in the sun, they visited Point Udall, a historic statue on the east end of St. Croix. This day truly uplifted their spirits!"





WISCONSIN: "The LST Program Exceeds Its Assessment Goal!"

By Felicia Williams,

LST Program Director, WestCare Wisconsin



"WE HIT OUR 60 MARK! The Life Skills Training (LST) program has officially reached a huge milestone! In September of 2019, WestCare Wisconsin was awarded a Strategic Prevention Framework (SPF) grant by The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) Center for Substance Abuse Prevention (CSAP). We were given a year to get things in place and lined up for the 2020 school year, which included working on our implementation plan, strategic plan, needs assessment and completing 60 program assessments with students and written consent from the parents. This amazing team consists of our Vice President for Wisconsin, Travis Landry, our Epidemiologist, William 'Dustin' Cantrell and his Research Assistant, Shamari Tripp, our LST Program Director, Felicia Williams and our Prevention Specialist, Brandie Bell. All of the necessary requirements to build the foundation of this grant had been completed.

Then, COVID-19 hit and just like many of the schools around the world, Milwaukee's public schools went virtual. The team immediately went into brainstorming mode and have collaborated with local principals on plans for the 2020 school session. While creating plans A, B and C, our team met with both parents and students on porches and in parking lots - simply by any means necessary while practicing social distancing.

We are proud to announce that although COVID-19 may have slowed down the world, WestCare Wisconsin's CSAP team didn't! On October 9th, we had a total of three assessments scheduled for that morning. The team called each other before to lend encouragement. But, by 9:45am of that morning, we were calling each other screaming because we had made the goal! We had a conference call scheduled with our SAMHSA Government Project Officer (GPO) later that day and when we got on the call, we were able to get our GPO, Damaris Richardson, to do a little celebratory dance with us as well! It was an amazing feeling to know that we were still able to accomplish this goal even during a global pandemic! Great job, team!"



DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS: *Celebrating Our WestCare Family!*



- December 25th: Scott Bustamonte
- December 26th: Christopher Mitchell
- December 29th: Lupe Arechiga
- December 29th: Mildred Rivera
- December 30th: Cardaysha Thomas
- December 30th: Ashlee Vasquez
- December 31st: Elina Herrera
- December 31st: Erika Johnson
- December 31st: Timothy Maldonado
- December 16th: Phrastine Johnson
- December 16th: Randell Wiggins
- December 17th: Carolina Tauler
- December 18th: Danielle Angellakis
- December 18th: Dwayne Ellis
- December 18th: Lourdes Hereaux
- December 18th: Jessica Jean-Marie
- December 22nd: Lurrell Alston
- December 22nd: Ronesha Ward
- December 25th: Katherine Hernandez Franco
- December 26th: Amanda Mendez
- December 27th: Kristin Pascale
- December 27th: Barbara Streeter
- December 31st: Carolyn Annand
- December 31st: Leah Braswell

Arizona

- December 12th: Andrew Sgroi
- December 19th: Cassie Jarvis

California

- December 1st: Dylan Jenkins
- December 1st: Valentina Sanchez
- December 2nd: Christopher Lanin
- December 3rd: Elena Esquivel
- December 4th: Samantha Anthony
- December 5th: Jennifer Zamorano
- December 6th: Melissa Robinson
- December 6th: Elisha Simpson-Sanchez
- December 10th: Mardi Palacios
- December 11th: Ron Mabry
- December 11th: Carlene Mendez
- December 12th: Marsha Thomasson
- December 17th: Alfonso Perez
- December 18th: Francisco Gonzalez
- December 18th: Thao Lee
- December 19th: Rosemary Kirchgessner
- December 19th: Alexandria Lazalde
- December 19th: Roy Perez
- December 20th: Nichole Mull
- December 21st: Samuel Alonzo
- December 21st: Jay-R Padua
- December 22nd: Bruno Sivongxay
- December 24th: Jenny Gonzalez
- December 24th: Sierra Scott

Florida

- December 1st: Laura Clarke
- December 1st: Charlene Jenkins
- December 3rd: Brenda Auffrey
- December 3rd: Janelle Dickson
- December 3rd: Tiffany Thurston
- December 4th: Kristin Flores
- December 4th: Alaina Perry
- December 4th: Liliana Rojas
- December 5th: Julian Costa
- December 5th: Carline Thomas
- December 6th: Christopher Jones
- December 8th: Tammy Geanoulis
- December 9th: Gloria Ramirez
- December 10th: Timothy Lancaster
- December 10th: Ricardo Sandoval
- December 10th: Barbara White
- December 11th: Lisa Tracy
- December 12th: Rebecca Angel
- December 12th: Kaylee Armstrong
- December 12th: Kenia Chavarria
- December 12th: Renee McKenney
- December 12th: Natalie Moses-Lawrence
- December 13th: Karen Mesa
- December 13th: Andrea Theodore
- December 14th: Carl Garvin
- December 14th: Patricia Keys
- December 14th: Indy Massey

Foundation

- December 2nd: Scott Faulkenberry
- December 2nd: Shawn Jenkins
- December 3rd: Paula Forbes
- December 5th: Misty Caudill
- December 5th: Emily Hoffner
- December 6th: Tung Cao
- December 6th: Frank Rabbito
- December 8th: Tanya Lowell
- December 8th: David Rice
- December 15th: Denise Johnson-Williams
- December 18th: Jackeline Alers
- December 21st: Karen Allen
- December 24th: Robert Vasquez
- December 26th: Janelle Schneider

Georgia

- December 7th: Sandra Wilson
- December 18th: Chanelle Harris
- December 21st: Stephen Churn
- December 22nd: Eldredge Washington
- December 31st: Christina New

DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS: *Celebrating Our WestCare Family!*

Illinois

- December 5th: Kimberly Goodhand
- December 8th: Trista Leaming
- December 9th: Jeffrey Hill
- December 9th: Cassandra Steinz
- December 14th: Carolyn Ahlback
- December 14th: Melissa Ferraro
- December 16th: Atanya Miller
- December 20th: Megan DeMoss
- December 24th: Wendy Brown

Iowa

- December 3rd: Jennifer Cleveland

Kentucky

- December 1st: Brenda Hall
- December 11th: Tommy Ratliff
- December 16th: Kaylene Burke
- December 17th: Billy Sawyers
- December 28th: Justin Kerr
- December 30th: Ronetta Tucker

Nevada

- December 3rd: Leo Magrdichian
- December 7th: Nanette Baltazar
- December 11th: Jennifer Dobbins-Finn
- December 15th: Grace Cadavona
- December 17th: Irma Magrdichian
- December 22nd: Brandi Chardon
- December 24th: Arlinda Brooks
- December 28th: Douglas Date
- December 29th: Andrea Raney

Ohio

- December 1st: Robert M. Brown
- December 1st: Brynn Flickinger
- December 18th: Brian Hoerner
- December 16th: Elizabeth McFadgen
- December 17th: Christine Milby
- December 21st: Wendy Berkshire
- December 25th: Amanda Cox

Pacific Islands

- December 3rd: Mia Madlambayan
- December 12th: Raven Saville
- December 18th: Lavina Camacho
- December 24th: Beverlyn Coleman

Puerto Rico

- December 1st: Louis Padilla
- December 3rd: Jose Figueroa Barbosa
- December 28th: Belinda Morales

Tennessee

- December 31st: Kimberly Dawson

Texas

- December 28th: Ermelinda Papayanopolus

Wisconsin

- December 30th: Brandie Bell





EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT: December Coping Calendar

"2020 has been a difficult year in so many ways. We have suffered with uncertainty, anxiety, isolation and challenges. One thing that can hold us together and help us get through is **kindness**. Although we can't change our situation, we can choose to respond to others (and ourselves) with kindness. And when we're kind, everything goes better. We help others, we help ourselves and we encourage others to be kinder too. As this year comes to a close, I wish you and all of those that you love many blessings. Be well always..." - *Susan A. Rinaldi, Director of Employee Engagement, WestCare Foundation*



KINDNESS CALENDAR: DECEMBER 2020



MONDAY



TUESDAY

WEDNESDAY

THURSDAY

FRIDAY

SATURDAY

SUNDAY

1 Share the Kindness Calendar with others and spread kindness

2 Contact someone you can't be with to see how they are

3 Offer to help someone who is facing difficulties at the moment

4 Give kind comments to as many people as possible today

5 Make a gift for someone who is homeless or feeling lonely

6 Support a charity, cause or campaign you really care about

7 Leave a positive message for someone else to find

8 Do something helpful for a friend or family member

9 Notice when you're hard on yourself or others and be kind instead

10 Listen wholeheartedly to others without judging them

11 Be generous. Feed someone with food, love or kindness today

12 Buy an extra item and donate it to a local food bank

13 See how many different people you can smile at today

14 Share a happy memory or inspiring thought with a loved one

15 Contact an elderly neighbour and brighten up their day

16 Look for something positive to say to everyone you speak to

17 Practice gratitude. List the kind things others have done for you

18 Give away something that you have been holding on to

19 Buy locally and support independent shops near you

20 Contact someone who may be alone or feeling isolated

21 Appreciate kindness and thank people who do things for you

22 Congratulate someone for an achievement that may go unnoticed

23 Choose to give or receive the gift of forgiveness

24 Bring joy to others. Share something which made you laugh

25 Treat everyone with kindness today, including yourself!

26 Get outside. Pick up litter or do something kind for nature

27 Call a relative who is far away to say hello and have a chat

28 Be kind to the planet. Eat less meat and use less energy

29 Turn off digital devices and really listen to people

30 Let someone know how much you appreciate them and why

31 Plan some new acts of kindness to do in 2021

Let's look beyond our differences and help each other. Every act of kindness matters



ACTION FOR HAPPINESS

#DoGoodDecember



www.actionforhappiness.org

Learn more about this month's theme at www.actionforhappiness.org/do-good-december

Keep Calm · Stay Wise · Be Kind

*"For more great tips and strategies regarding self-care, coping and mindfulness, stay tuned to your email for monthly content as the Coping and Resilience Resource Guide is returning! Remember, in order for us to effectively Uplift the Human Spirit of those that we serve, we must not forget to take proper care of ourselves. As always, be well." - *Susan*

Complete your HRA

Try a company challenge

Track your steps

Talk with a coach

2021 WestCare Wellness

Have fun. Get healthy. Feel better.

Learn more about your health and wellbeing

Uplift your Wellness!

“Starting January 1, 2021, WestCare will be relaunching our Wellness Program with WellRight!

AND when you earn certain levels of points, you’ll be eligible for \$50.00/month in health insurance premium reductions throughout the year!” – *Susan A. Rinaldi, Director of Employee Engagement, WestCare Foundation*

**** Stay tuned for upcoming emails/announcements! ****



*By Lisa Jackson, GPC - Interim VP of Grants,
WestCare Foundation*



“As we approach our nation’s holiday season, **WestCare’s Grant Development Officers** are preparing for a busy time. Some of the non-competitive continuations are due at the end of the calendar year and others are due by early February. Since WestCare has almost 40 **Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)** grants and 25 to 30 other federal grants from agencies such as the **Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)**, **U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)**, **Administration of Children and Families (ACF)**, **Health Resources & Service Administration (HRSA)**, **Office of Justice Programs (OJP)** and the **U.S. Department of Veterans**

Affairs (VA), we have an abundance of continuation applications to complete.

Of course, I’m not saying we are doing this alone as the staff in each of these programs are working hard to complete these applications. They are gathering data about their programs, the number of clients served, the completion rates and other significant occurrences during the past year. Our accountants are reviewing the spending, what funds are available for the continuation of services and what changes should be made to ensure our maximum benefit from the funding.

It’s a time for reflection on what has gone well, what we should change, what we should do more of and how we have helped. It’s kind of sobering and enlightening at the same time. My family always watches, ‘It’s A Wonderful Life’ during the holiday season, a movie that shows us how each life interacts with every other life we encounter. Non-competitive continuations provide us with the same kind of opportunity to reflect on this theme. We have a chance to consider how our programs interact with all of our clients. We may never know the full effect we have on a life or all lives that we’ve served, but we hope for the best. Thank you all for the wonderful work that you do and I hope you all have a joyous holiday season!”



HUMAN RESOURCES: "WestCare HR is now on Facebook!"

*By Preston Sharpston, HR Manager,
Appalachia, Great Lakes*

"Did you know that HR is on Facebook? In addition to WestCare's main and state Facebook pages, we in HR now have a presence as well!

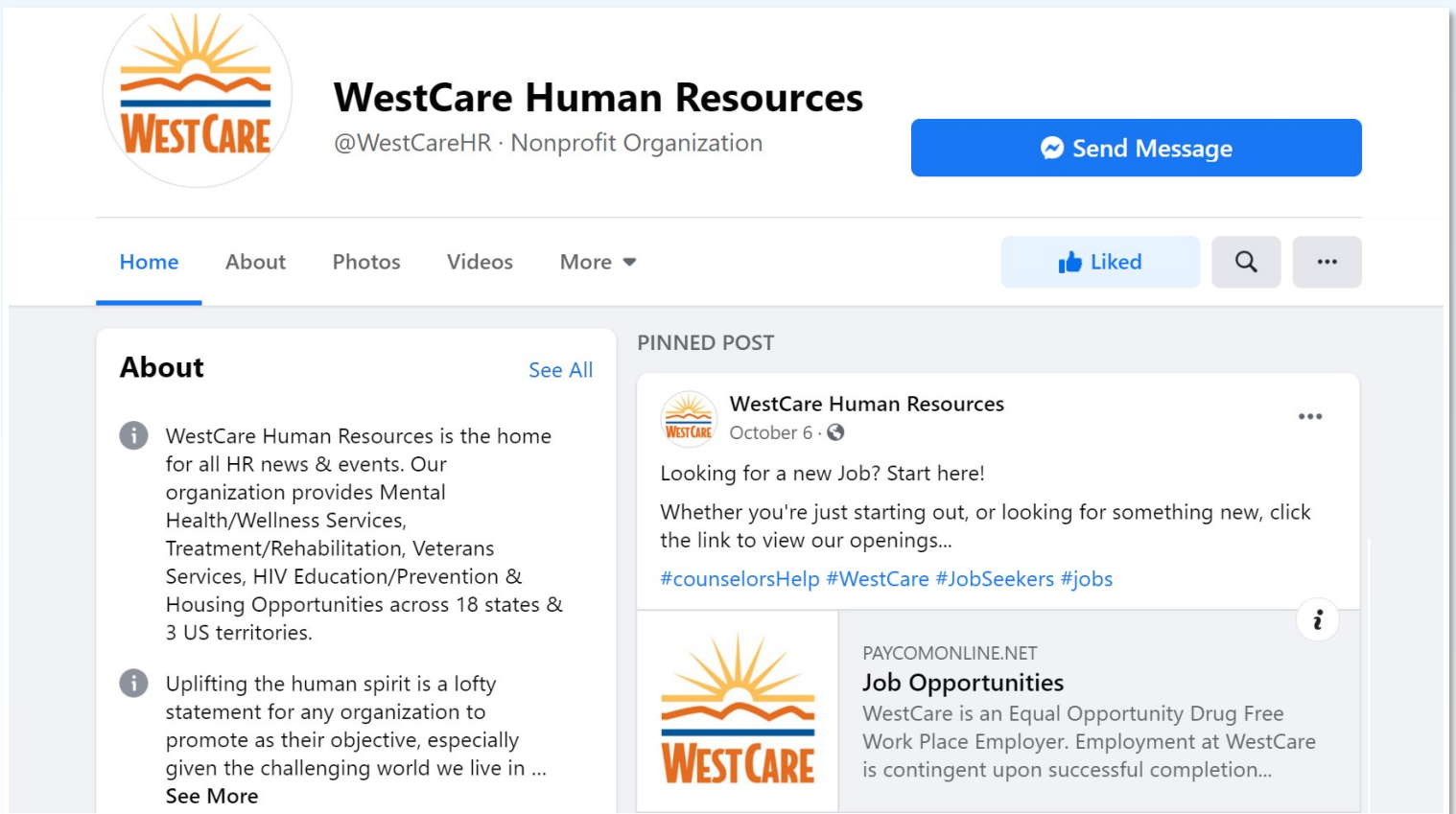
On this page, we intend to highlight you - our awesome employees and all of the incredible work that you do each and every day! So, whether you're a hiring manager in need of some job-promotion assistance, a director wanting to highlight your team's amazing work or there's

just someone that deserves special recognition, please send your content to: preston.sharpston@westcare.com and benjamin.hernandez@westcare.com with the subject line **HR PAGE SUBMISSION**. If your submission is approved, we'll let you know when it is posted and send you the link to share!

We encourage and welcome all submissions. If you find yourself visiting our page, we'd love it if you would give us a 'Like!' You can view our page here:

<https://www.facebook.com/WestCareHR>

We hope to see you soon!"



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- WestCare Human Resources is the home for all HR news & events. Our organization provides Mental Health/Wellness Services, Treatment/Rehabilitation, Veterans Services, HIV Education/Prevention & Housing Opportunities across 18 states & 3 US territories.
- Uplifting the human spirit is a lofty statement for any organization to promote as their objective, especially given the challenging world we live in ... See More

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October 6 · 🌐

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INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY: *“The Tale of CDS: WestCare’s Clinical Data System & Electronic Health Record”*

By Diane Ludens, Director of Software Development, WestCare Foundation



“The story of CDS begins in a trailer in downtown Las Vegas, Nevada. The year was 2004 and a group of clinicians had decided that they had enough of paper medical charts. They were running a **Community Triage Center** focused on serving the homeless and addicted population in a depressed area of the city. The labor-intensive client paperwork that was necessary to run the operation was stacking up and they longed for computerization. Although they had big dreams, being a non-profit organization, they couldn’t afford much.

Web-based software sounded like the thing for them. First, no pricey installations on personal computers were necessary because the only requirement was Internet Explorer 6. Second, the data could be stored on a ‘server’ in a secure location and not on a local computer that could be exposed to theft. And third, the data that was entered into the system would be real-time and consolidated in a structured manner - allowing reports to be generated for the program’s funder. Best of all, it meant no more days of data entry re-keying paper documents into Excel. Hooray! They reached out to a software developer who could help their vision become a reality and began their journey. The new system was wrapped inside of a password-protected ‘Intranet’ built using free open-source software tools. It was creatively named ‘Las Vegas CTC.’

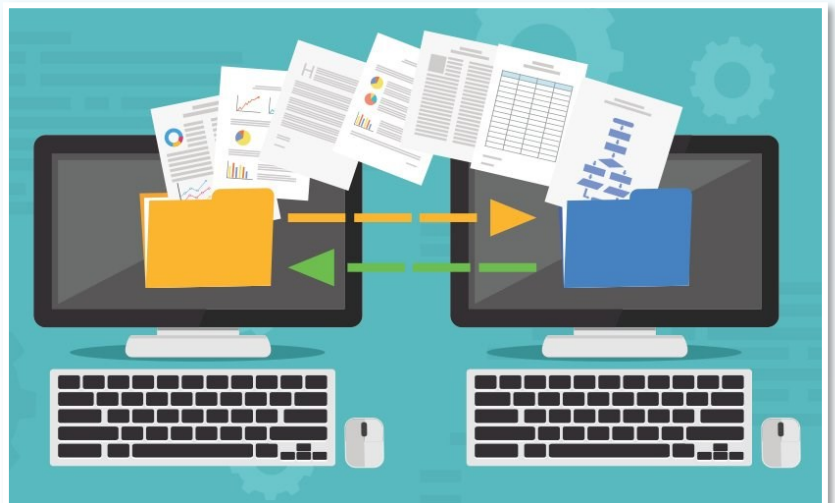
Las Vegas operations continued to grow and soon, another site – the **Mental Health Crisis Unit** – was coming online. Reality set in when the team tried to deploy their existing software here. There had been no consideration given to the data points that were important in a mental health setting as opposed to the substance abuse setting that they were so accustomed to. On top of that, the campus consisted of two unattached buildings, but only one of them had network connectivity. It was back to the drawing board. A network cable was draped on makeshift telephone poles between the admin and client housing buildings to get the necessary connectivity. The software went under the knife and a new system was born, again inventively named, ‘Las Vegas MHCU.’

No one could have imagined how quickly word would spread far and wide across the WestCare universe regarding this new approach to clinical documentation. ‘Paper free? I must have it!’ people would exclaim. It was time to hit the road and share the knowledge. The first stop was Pensacola, Florida. With all that had been learned about behavioral health, a hybrid could now be created which addressed homelessness, substance abuse as well as mental health. A menu option was added to the growing system, called - you guessed it – ‘Pensacola.’ This also brought on a brand new challenge, as this operation was not funded by a grant. Encounter claims had to be generated into a file called the EDI 837 for remittance to insurance companies. Work was again underway and a third-party electronic billing component was added.” *(Continued on Page 27)*

(Continued from Page 26) “Just when it seemed like the team knew everything, a snowy winter in Sheridan, Illinois would prove them wrong. This time, the clients were incarcerated in a medium security prison. Clinical workers were interspersed in block buildings separated by long and windy walks—far from the gate’s entrance. Along with the usual software deployment process to tackle, a tamper-proof way to clock in and out of shifts was needed at the point staff reached their desks. To make things even more challenging, security constraints prohibited outside internet access. To solve the first problem, USB fingerprint scanners were purchased for each WestCare computer and the software integrated with the devices to log the beginning and end of a shift. The connectivity issue was more complicated, since a prerequisite for web software was a link to the centralized database. It was time to get creative and the first step was a meeting with the prison warden. After months of waiting, clearance was granted for a dedicated server that was transported to Sheridan and installed inside of a locked prison cell. It would house a duplicate of the current Intranet software and utilize a local area network for the WestCare team. The software was adapted to meet the unique needs of the incarcerated substance abuse clients including a composite assessment called the Addiction Severity Index. Yet another menu option was added to the system – IDOC Sheridan – affectionately named after the Illinois Department of Corrections that had presented them with this challenge.

The next stop was Marathon, Florida, where a shift in thinking about software design began. Staff there already had an enterprise-level, though antiquated, management information system called ‘Community Mental Health Centers’ that was developed during the era of ‘dumb’ terminals with green/black screens that didn’t support a computer mouse. It was a server-based system that resided in ‘the treehouse,’ a tiny attic accessible only via ladder to keep the equipment safe from hurricanes. CMHC had to be replaced by the end of the fiscal year and the plan was to take this legacy system and replicate the functionality into a browser-based presentation. There were many meetings and grueling hours had in the Keys that year to uncover the network of programs from Key Largo to Key West. These were not just disparate locations, but separate companies with their own set of data and billing needs. Staff interviews were conducted with all stakeholders to gather requirements. Further knowledge about CMHC was gleaned from the documentation that shipped for each release in massive binders. It became clear that the little application, homegrown out of Las Vegas, was no longer big enough in scope. So, the question was posed, ‘What if everything that had been built so far could be combined and governed by a permission set based on job function and location?’ That would mean no separate menu options for every new program. The new system could encompass all that its predecessors had as well as any new features that they encountered in the future. The name needed to be decidedly generic but, descriptive. ‘Clinical Data System?’”

Stay tuned for Part 2 of the CDS saga in next month’s WestCare Express!





ABOUT WESTCARE: *Uplifting the Human Spirit Since 1973!*

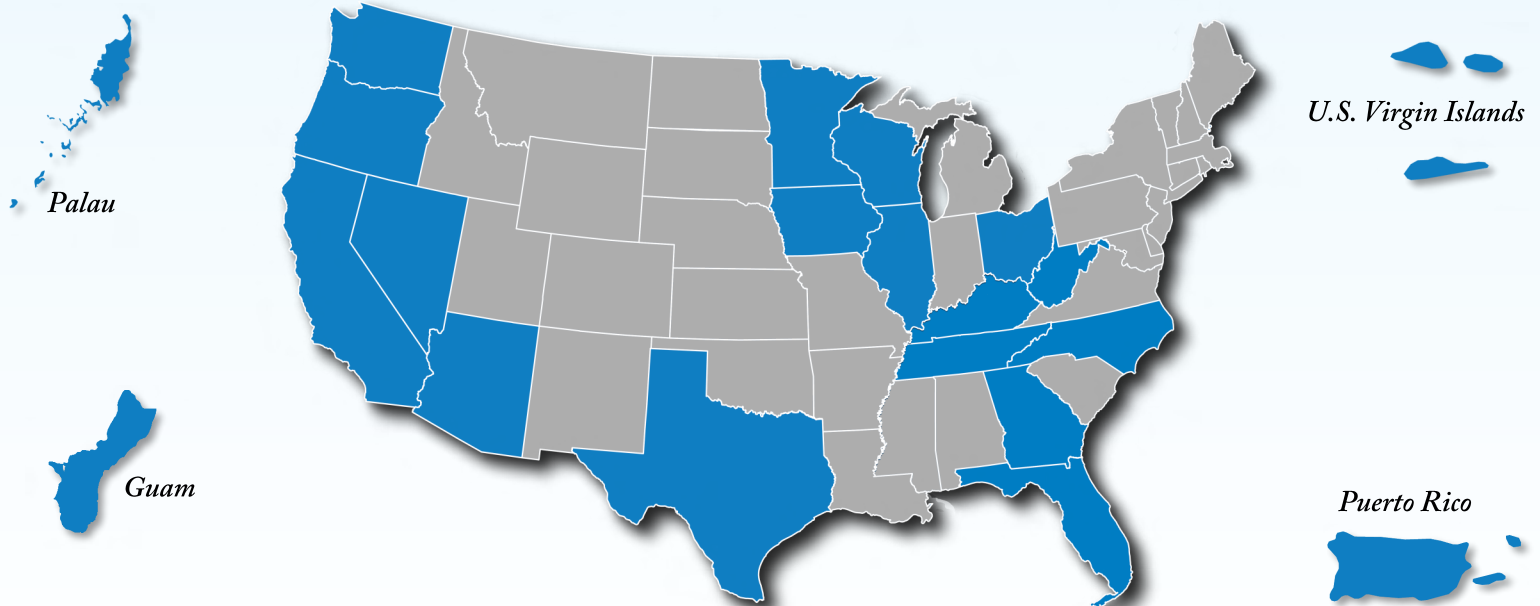
WestCare, a family of tax-exempt nonprofit organizations founded in 1973, provides a wide spectrum of behavioral health and human services in both residential and outpatient environments. Our service domains include **Treatment and Rehabilitation, Mental Health, Veterans Services, Criminal Justice, Housing Opportunities, Education and 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.



WHERE WE SERVE

WestCare proudly operates programs in 17 states, three U.S. territories, the Dominican Republic and the Republic of Palau!

- *Arizona*
- *California*
- *Florida*
- *Georgia*
- *Illinois*
- *Iowa*
- *Kentucky*
- *Minnesota*
- *Nevada*
- *North Carolina*
- *Ohio*
- *Oregon*
- *Tennessee*
- *Texas*
- *Washington*
- *West Virginia*
- *Wisconsin*



For more information on WestCare's many services and locations, please call (702) 385-2090 or visit westcare.com



Meet The Editors!



While the Express newsletter wouldn't be possible without the regular submissions that we receive from our amazing staff, it wouldn't come together without our editors, Gabriela McNiel and Michael Mygind! When they're not working on The Express, they're handling various marketing duties including promotional materials, social media, event planning, video production and more!

CA: Gabriela Espinosa-McNiel, Director of Marketing and Michael Mygind, Marketing Specialist



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If you know someone who loves to shop online, they can help WestCare by shopping at *AmazonSmile* (bookmark <https://smile.amazon.com/ch/86-0852629>) and selecting WestCare Foundation. A portion of the purchase will be donated to WestCare at no cost to the shopper.



WestCare is registered with *PayPal Giving Fund*. When shopping on eBay or using PayPal online, users can select WestCare as their charity of choice. Donations can be made by visiting <https://www.paypal.com/fundraiser/105865137050618816/charity/74402>



WestCare is also on *Mightycause*, the online fundraising engine. The organization participates in events like #GivingTuesday. Donations can be made by heading to the following link: <https://www.mightycause.com/organization/Westcare-Foundation>

