

# THE *Express*

OUR WESTCARE STORIES  
FROM AROUND THE WORLD



## Welcome from Dick Steinberg

*President & CEO*

### WestCare Family,

With the recent passing of two long-time members of our family, **June Gore** and **Michael Langford**, we dedicate this issue to their lasting memory and in honor of the many lives that they have impacted for the better through their selfless service. Please see **Pages 2 and 3** for tributes dedicated to these two amazing individuals.

November is a month to remind ourselves of the many things that we are thankful for. On November 18, our family of programs came together to share words of thanks with each other as part of an annual tradition that is now in its fourth year - **Thankful Thursday**. I'd like to thank our amazing Human Resources team for helping arrange this organization-wide effort as well as everyone who participated!

When it comes to reflecting on what we are thankful for, it's hard not to think about the duty and sacrifices that have been made by the active-duty members of our armed forces as well as the estimated 19 million U.S. Veterans living today. As such, November is a pivotal time for honoring these heroes with observances including **Military Family Appreciation Month**, the

**U.S. Marine Corps' 246th Birthday** on November 10, and **Veterans Day** on November 11. To these brave men and women and the family that have stood by them through thick and thin, thank you.

As a Veteran who has the honor of serving alongside many other Veterans in this organization, it warms my heart to know that we are recognized in the communities that we serve as a valuable lifeline for those who gave their all to ensure our nation's continued freedom. With unique Veterans programs in Arizona, California, Florida, Georgia, Guam, Illinois, Iowa, Nevada, Oregon, Washington, and the Republic of Palau – we are hitting our mark by supporting them in a wide variety of ways including through housing, employment, and linkages to VA benefits. Through our work, we are not only doing our part to help, but are giving thanks each and every day for all that they have given us. To our staff within the domain of Veterans Services, thank you.

To our entire WestCare family, I hope that you all had a wonderful Thanksgiving holiday full of rest and new memories made with your loved ones. I'd also like to send a special thank you to our residential staff who did not get to be home, but dedicated their time to ensuring that those that we serve had a memorable Thanksgiving Day. I am thankful for your time, commitment, and heart that you put into your care of those that we serve. Thank you for joining us in Uplifting the Human Spirit and until next time...

*Dick Steinberg*



*In Memoriam* June Gore, WestCare Foundation (1955 – 2021)

It is with great sadness that we announce the passing of a longtime and beloved member of our WestCare Family, June Gore, who recently succumbed to her battle with cancer.

June began her career with WestCare in 1993 when we only had operations in AZ, CA, and NV. At that time, she processed payroll for each employee by hand, which Dick Steinberg would then sign. She was responsible for processing checks for every WestCare employee over the past 28 years, which resulted in well over 500,000 checks that were issued directly by June.

She was a stable force within our organization who had great passion and heart for her fellow staff and it showed in the relationships that she cultivated throughout her tenure. While she often had a private demeanor, she made her love for her pets as well as plants very well known to those around her to the point where fellow staff began growing plants of their own in their offices. She was a mentor and a valuable friend.

One of her dearest friends and fellow longtime member of the WestCare family, Darlene Terrill, shared some thoughts on her friend, June. *"June didn't have family in Nevada and neither did I. So, in many ways, we were two peas in a pod. With her coming from North Dakota and myself coming from Minnesota, you could say that it was the desert that brought these two Midwest girls together. As her health started to decline, I encouraged her family to work with us to provide support and WestCare was there each step of the way to help as*

*she made her way back home to North Dakota to spend her last days with her family. She absolutely loved WestCare."*

Another longtime staff of WestCare and friend of June, Susan Rinaldi, commented, *"June was a terrific and loyal friend who had a great sense of humor. She also cared deeply. I miss her smile and her laugh. When I first came to WestCare 17 years ago, June and I immediately clicked and became friends. We'd often discuss our favorite TV/Netflix shows and our beloved dogs, too. We both knew that we could turn to each other with work questions and I sure had plenty as a newcomer! She was always patient and kind, not only to me, but to all who came to her for help. Whenever WestCare was either opening a new program or closing one, we knew we could count on her to jump in and assist where needed. Whenever I had to travel to Las Vegas, my very first stop was to visit June, to see her smile and hear her laugh. I will miss that..."*

June was loved by many and her time at WestCare created many cherished memories for us to remember her by. She carried a bright light that was undeniable to anyone who had the pleasure of interacting with her. We thank June for all of her contributions to our organization and are grateful that we have had the pleasure and honor of knowing her. To her loved ones, we send our most heartfelt condolences for their loss and thank them for allowing us to spend some time with this amazing woman.







## *In Memoriam* Michael Langford, WestCare Georgia (1958 – 2021)

We are saddened to share that on November 15, Michael Langford, longtime Regional Vice President for WestCare Georgia, has passed away due to natural causes at the age of 63.

WestCare's first connection to Michael Langford was in 2002 when a 14-year-old human trafficking victim came to our youth shelter in Las Vegas. WestCare worked with Metro Police, Vice Squad, Child Protective Services, and the Court to hold those trafficking the young lady accountable. Once assured that she was safe, we worked with law enforcement in Georgia to get her home. A team consisting of the mother, law enforcement, and two representatives from the mayor of Atlanta's office, Michael being one of them, traveled to Las Vegas to bring the young lady home. While in town, they toured our youth shelter and were impressed with how we coordinated services, and at the end of the visit, he commented, "I think that there's going to be a WestCare Georgia someday." At the time, they had a children's shelter in Stone Mountain, Georgia, but it wasn't as connected to the community nor did it have the partnerships like WestCare's Las Vegas Shelter did. In 2003, the contract to operate the Stone Mountain Shelter went out for bid and WestCare submitted our proposal and was awarded the contract. We knew that we needed solid local leadership to be successful, so we extended a job offer to Michael to lead WestCare Georgia and he officially began his journey with us as Vice President of WestCare Georgia in January of 2003 - almost 19 years ago. Earlier this year, he was promoted to the Chief Diversity Officer for WestCare Foundation. During his tenure with the organization, he helped Georgia expand from a single program in 2003 to a family of eight programs in 2021.

On top of all that he did for WestCare, he was instrumental in the community dating back to the Atlanta Child Murders that took place between 1979 and 1981, where in his early 20's, he and his brother, late Senator Arthur Langford Jr., organized search parties for a string of missing persons cases that targeted and took the lives of 29 black children and young adults. In the years that followed, he served in numerous roles, including as a counselor for the United Youth-Adult Conference (UYAC) founded by his brother and, up until his passing, the President of the UYAC. In 2000, he established the UYAC's Arthur Langford, Jr. Teen Leadership Institute, a 10-week leadership and community service summer program for youth ages 14 – 17. He has also served on countless councils including the Atlanta Children's Memorial Task Force in 2019, where he worked alongside local officials and members of law enforcement to reopen the case files from the Atlanta Child Murders and retest the evidence using modern technology with hopes of bringing justice for the families who spent years not knowing the identity of their loved ones' assailant/s. With over three decades of service to his community, on July 17 of 2017, Atlanta's City Council and former Mayor, Kasim Reed, awarded Michael with the highest civilian award, the Phoenix Award, and proclaimed the day Michael Langford Day.

We want to send our utmost support to his family and the community that he worked so hard for as they process this tremendous loss during this challenging time. As we honor his legacy and contributions, we feel that it is only fitting to share Michael's final message that he sent to his team just a handful of hours before he said his final goodbye:

*"I would like to express my sincere appreciation and gratitude to every member of the WestCare Georgia team for our role in providing consistent quality care to Georgia residents for more than 19 years. As we approach another Thanksgiving, I hope that you will take time to reflect on the things that matter most like faith, family, and friends. The last two years have been a challenge for us all as we met the needs of clients amidst a stressful pandemic. I realize that for many days during this time, you showed up for our clients while operating on less than a full tank and sometimes were overcome with the stress of the day's challenges. Yet, you endured and delivered quality care for our clients, often times amidst the storm. I often say that 10% of life is what happens to us and the other 90% is how we respond. Your response to the many challenges that we have faced reflects your genuine commitment to WestCare's mission of Uplifting the Human Spirit. Thank You for your service! It's true; heroes really do work here."*



November is a time when we pause and give thanks. What better opportunity to thank all of our Veterans who chose to continue to serve here at WestCare! I'd especially like to thank our dedicated Veterans Services staff for all that they do. Through their continued service, they are bettering the lives of these courageous men and women who have selflessly laid their lives on the line to protect the freedoms we are so fortunate to enjoy.

I know I speak for all of us when I say that we stand with our Vets and promise to continue to advocate for and expand WestCare's supportive services for Veterans and their families. Just as they gave their all to protect us, it is our responsibility to ensure they don't go a day without food, shelter, employment, security, and most of all - dignity.

**God Bless America!**

- **Craig J. Knierim, Colonel (Ret.)**, U.S. Air Force, *Senior Vice President of Veteran Services*, WestCare Foundation



## A Month of Fun

By Emily Selby, *Case Manager/BHT*

During the month of October, **WestCare Arizona** was busy having fun starting with a BINGO fundraiser for our **Safehouse Domestic Violence Shelter!** The event was sponsored by **Anderson Ford of Bullhead City** hosted a BINGO night with all proceeds supporting the program's services. Our staff joined the community for BINGO, dinner, raffles, and laughs! Thank you so much for your support, Anderson Ford!

Later in the month, we took part in a local "trunk or treat" event! Our team dressed the part and handed out candy to the community along with other local businesses. It's events like these that allow us to mingle with our community and celebrate the various festivities that the holidays bring!



WestCare Arizona



@westcareaz



## CCTRP Spreads Awareness and Support Regarding Domestic Violence

By Stephanie Bertrand, *Program Director*

Domestic violence is a reality that occurs within every class, age group, race, and religion. It happens in families, friendships, and intimate relationships. Intimate partner violence happens within same and different sex partnerships and happens whether people are married, living together, or dating. Approximately one in four women has been a victim of domestic violence.

In observance of **Domestic Violence Awareness Month** in October, the women served at our **Custody to Community Transitional Reentry Program (CCTRP) in San**

**Diego** showed their support for each other as well as those who are still experiencing domestic violence with various activities throughout the week of October 18. The week started with a domestic violence booth featuring educational materials, safety plans, and purple face masks for clients and staff to wear. They also gave themselves manicures using various shades of purple nail polish as well as rhinestones and decals.

Using purple pens that were donated to the program by a local Staples, our ladies were

encouraged to write their story and/or reach out to someone who was still suffering by writing them a letter of encouragement. To close out the week, two current clients who are now survivors, elected to share their experiences, strength, and hope with their peers and staff during the weekly house meeting.

If you're experiencing abuse in your relationship, you are not alone. Contact an advocate 24/7 by texting "START" to 88788 or by visiting [thehotline.org](http://thehotline.org)



WestCare California



@WestCareCA



@westcarecalifornia



## The Dominican Republic's CAC Holds Its First Meeting

By Yolanda Gonzalez Malave, Program Assistant & HR Coordinator



On Friday, October 30, **WestCare Dominican Republic's Community Action Council (CAC)** held its first meeting! Cristian Duarte, Chief Operational Officer, welcomed their members and offered a summary of the services offered by WestCare in the Caribbean and in general, as well as the objectives of the CAC.

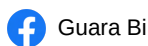
We were also honored to have the attendance of Mr. Ken Orbals, Executive Vice President/Chief Financial Officer and Ms. Nayeli Knuth, Controller – International and Offshore, both on behalf of WestCare Foundation and as well as our Foundation members from **WestCare Puerto Rico**.

In the Dominican Republic, our CAC is composed of different professionals in the fields of health, education, law, as well as members of the faith-based community - all of them committed to serving and helping those in

We are very eager to see the excellent work that we know this CAC will do in the Dominican Republic and how they will work on the development of new projects to impact the communities in need.



Read more stories from Guara Bi



## A WestCare Gulf Coast Story of Progress

By Shantia, WEMERGE Women's Residential Program

My name is Shantia. I am 52 years old and am from Sarasota, FL. When I first came to WestCare, I was homeless, broken, and on drugs. I had been out there a long time and I didn't know what life was like on this side of the road. So, I had to learn to become comfortable with being uncomfortable.

When I came to **WestCare**, things changed because deep in my soul, I wanted something more for my life. So, I worked hard in the program and reached the employment phase where I was blessed with a job as a cashier at Tropical Smoothie Café. I wake up every morning ready to put a smile on a customer or co-worker's face. I have customers who come in just to see me and I feel so blessed. Looking back on where I came from to see where I am today is amazing!



WestCare GulfCoast - Florida  
@WestCareGCFL



## It Takes a Village to Keep Those We Care for Healthy

By Elena Hoyos, Administrative Services Director

On October 22, **The Village South** in collaboration with **Walmart Pharmacy** hosted a community vaccination event for both employees and consumers. During the event, vaccinations were available for the flu, hepatitis (A, B, A/B), tetanus, shingles, pneumonia, meningococcal disease, chickenpox, the mumps, and HPV (Human Papilloma Virus) as well as Pfizer and Moderna vaccines and boosters for COVID-19. This preventative care event was offered during working hours allowing staff to stop by without much disturbance to their working day. The planned three-hour event became a nearly five-hour success!

We are thankful to Walmart and its amazing pharmacy team for helping us keep our team and consumers healthy so we may continue our mission of Uplifting the Human Spirit!



The Village South, Inc  
@thevillagesouth @thevillagesouth



## The GCC's Personal Growth Center Gives an iOTA With Personal Health Coaching

By Alfonsina De Asmundis, Program Coordinator

The **Guidance/Care Center's (GCC) Personal Growth Center (PGC)** staff and members are collaborating with **The Healthy Mind Lab at Washington University School of Medicine** and **Thriving Mind South Florida** in conducting their wellness study. **HealthyBodies | HealthyMinds** is a lifestyle interactive **Obesity Treatment Approach (iOTA)** program for people with early severe mental illness. It is a nine-month study that includes a monthly health coaching session with PGC staff for support, education and goal setting, and weekly text messaging for accountability and tracking progress in support of healthy behaviors.

Three members of the PGC are participating in the study and have chosen to share their testimonies.

PGC staff and members are happy to be part of this study that not only helps our members, but also serves as a tool that will help others in similar situations.

*"I chose to participate in the wellness study because I want to lose weight and I felt that I could learn some new techniques for being healthy and losing weight. I have gained a world of knowledge and information. I enjoy getting texts with tips that help in my quest to lose weight."* - Jolynn S.

*"I am participating in the study because I want to lose weight. I have become more aware of my diet and my water intake."* - Haley S.

*"I am participating in this study because I want to lose weight and feel better. The most important thing that I have learned so far is to have the knowledge to differentiate between hunger based on emotions. For example, when I am eating because I am bored and when I have a hunger for fueling."* - Robert R.



Guidance/Care Center by WestCare



## Taking Time for Self-Care

By Michael Langford, Chief Diversity Officer

Those of us who accept the awesome responsibility of providing human services and quality care to the communities that WestCare serves must also acknowledge and take time to meet the needs of our selves. Oftentimes, we are so engaged and consumed with providing a process of healing for our clients and achieving desired outcomes for others that we end up compromising the physical, spiritual, and mental health of ourselves. Over the last year and a half, the COVID-19 pandemic has challenged essential frontline service providers to give more of themselves for an extended and stressful period of time. I am always impressed and amazed when I stop to reflect on the lives that are being improved and restored on

a daily basis through WestCare's many evidenced-based programs across the country. It seems that everyone has finally come to the conclusion that human service providers are essential and are critically important to the overall health of society. I encourage us to be mindful of self-care and the personal tools needed to engage in a process of healing for everyone that we come in contact with including our clients, our families, and ourselves.

Just remember that you are an important part of WestCare's mission and we need you to be the best you that you can possibly be.

*Michael submitted this article shortly before his passing. He will be missed.*



Follow for more about Georgia

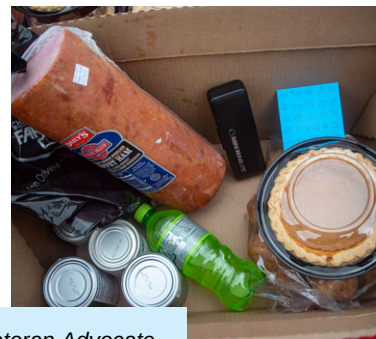
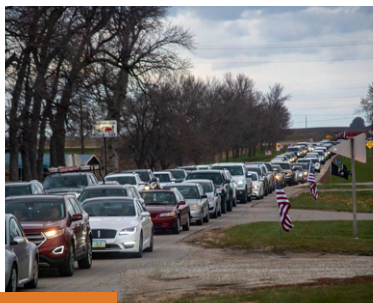


WestCare Georgia



@westcarega





## Hunting with Heroes Shares Some Fall Warmth on Veterans Day

By Molly Henderson, *Veteran Advocate*

In Lakota, Iowa, located in Kossuth County, **Hunting with Heroes** is a 501 (c)(3) non-profit organization that has been busy enhancing the welfare and recovery of wounded and non-wounded active U.S. Military personnel and Veterans by providing physical and emotional healing through the hunting and fishing trips that they organize.

They organized their Veterans Day outing as a drive-through event on Main Street that acknowledges and shows appreciation for all Veterans who have served and for Veteran

widows by giving out gifts and meal kits! **WestCare Iowa – FAVA’s** Lead Veteran Navigator, Rose Holmes, decided to work on Veterans Day so that our Veterans would be able to benefit from this generous event. Thank you, Rose! Each Veteran received a box full of food and other goodies such as flashlights and gas cards! They were able to give away over 3000 pounds of ham, nearly 6000 potatoes, three raffle prizes of custom-made rifles, 500 Maglites, nearly \$20,000 in gifts, 10,000 ounces of Pepsi products, over 200 pounds of pumpkin pie, and

nearly 2000 canned goods to the 530+ Veterans that attended the event!

Thank you, Hunting with Heroes for the generosity that you've shown for our Veterans! We appreciate your kindness and ongoing efforts. We would also like to thank their community partners, Christensen Farms, HyVee Grocery Store, The Heartwarmers Quilt Guild, and Pepsi for sponsoring this event. To all of our Veterans whether they are at home or abroad, are active duty, reserves, or retired – **THANK YOU!**



Follow FAVA for more stories



FAVA (Family Alliance for Veterans of America)



## WestCare Illinois Congratulates Its Newest SIP Graduates

By Melissa Valentine, *Program Coordinator*

In Southern Illinois, the month of October was bittersweet and uplifting. In June, **Dixon Springs and DuQuoin Structured Impact Program (SIP)** staff were able to return to work at the **Murphysboro Life Skills Re-Entry Center** where the program is temporarily being housed. SIP focuses on a treatment-centered disciplinary regimen within the **Illinois Department of Corrections (IDOC)**. Participants are non-violent first-time offenders who are serving four months in lieu of up to an eight-year sentence. We began the journey with 22 clients and many constraints that we were not used to. Staff rose to the occasion and went above and beyond to acclimate to any obstacles encountered and accommodate the clients.

On October 7, all staff and client efforts were celebrated as the first group of SIP participants in over one year graduated. A ceremony was held with client families, other program participants, and staff on behalf of IDOC staff and WestCare. It was a very emotional and exciting day. For these young gentlemen, it is the first day of the rest of their lives - a day that they can be proud of for now and forever. They accomplished no small feat by voluntarily participating in this extensive and difficult program and it is heartwarming as staff to have been able to share their success with them and their families!



WestCare Illinois

## Perry Clines Opens a Diaper Pantry With Support from Their Community

By Jeremie Delauder, *MAT Research Assistant*



Thanks to a collaboration between **Anthem Blue Cross Blue Shield** and **State Senator Phillip Wheeler** that resulted in a \$10,000 donation, **WestCare Kentucky's Perry Cline Emergency Shelter** was able to start a diaper pantry for families and children who have been victims of or are at risk of domestic violence. We will now be able to provide diapers, baby wipes, formula, clothing, and other miscellaneous items needed for child-rearing. In addition to these material supplies, Anthem has also offered educational courses and meetings to help nearby families become more self-sufficient as their children age.

Not only will staff be able to distribute these much-needed resources to numerous families within the emergency shelter facility itself, but these supplies and resources will also be used in their community outreach program as well. Staff will keep a log of families served and will submit informal testimonials about their experience with the program.

The staff at the Perry Cline Emergency Shelter are thankful to **Mr. Waylon Nelson**, Anthem Blue Cross Blue Shield and State Senator Phillip Wheeler for the opportunity to collaborate and better serve our former, current, and future clientele!



 WestCare Kentucky



## The 2021 OPTIMA Ultimate Street Car Invitational: Racing for Good

By Sasha Whitmire, *Program Supervisor*

From November 6 – 7, the **Ultimate Street Car Association (USCA)** presented the **2021 OPTIMA Ultimate Street Car Invitational** at the **Las Vegas Motor Speedway**. **WestCare Nevada** was proud to be on hand as the honored guest of the USCA for the second year. All gate fees for the event were donated to our programs. Myself along with several clients residing in our Men's Transitional Housing program arrived early to greet drivers, crew, and spectators and collect a multitude of gifts including monetary donations and non-perishable food items. It was a huge success!

Clients and staff were thrilled to have the opportunity to see such spectacular vehicles compete at different challenges and races throughout the weekend. We are so grateful for the generosity of all whom supported, especially **Carrie Strange**, Project Manager for FM3 Performance Marketing, Inc. whom has been committed to supporting WestCare year after year. Her amount of heart is absolutely unforgettable!



 WestCare Nevada

 @westcarenevada

 @westcarenevada





## Celebrating Our Aging Mastery Program

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

The **Aging Mastery Program (AMP)** is all about helping clients age 55 and older become the masters of their own aging playbook. This evidence-informed enrichment program developed by the National Council of Aging covers 10 topics from exercise and sleep to financial fitness and healthy relationships. At **East End Community Services**, these topics are usually covered during a two-week session with community outings and enrichment opportunities along the way. When our seniors complete the AMP course, they're rewarded with a Chromebook to keep so that they can continue to connect with us and their peers in weekly Zoom meetings and access their AMP courses.

During our fall sessions, we had the opportunity to take a number of outings to **The Salvation Army Dayton Kroc Center** for a Senior Health Fair, a vaccine clinic, and a senior yoga class in conjunction with Falls Prevention Awareness Week! As a result of these events, several program participants joined the center's Silver Sneakers program to keep their bodies moving! In addition, the majority of our participants continue to attend weekly Zoom meetings after completing their AMP course and continue to visit our offices and attend outings. It's these kinds of lasting, healthy connections that show us what it truly means to become a master of your own playbook and make us so proud of our team for securing 79 new Chromebooks to share with our next group of graduates this winter!



Learn more about East End



East End Community Services



@eastendcommunityservices



## VETcare Honored at Corvallis Spirits Fest 2021

Nancy Pine, *Case Manager*

On November 6, **VETcare** had the honor of being one of the recipients of proceeds from **The Second Annual Corvallis Spirits Fest**. The event was presented by **4 Spirits Distillery**, who invited us to attend and represent VETcare at one of their exhibitor tables.

Dawson Officer established 4 Spirits Distillery in 2011 and named it as a tribute to four combat soldiers that he served within the Oregon National Guard 2 Battalion, 162 Infantry Brigade: Lt. Erik McCrae, Sgt. Justin Linden, Sgt. Justin Eyerly, and Sgt. David Roustum. These four men lost their lives in 2004/2005 serving in Baghdad, Iraq. There isn't a day that goes by that he doesn't see their faces and think about their loss, and the events before and after their service to this country. You can find out more about 4 Spirits, their mission, and their commitment to local Veterans by visiting [www.4spiritsdistillery.com](http://www.4spiritsdistillery.com).

This year, the Corvallis Spirits Fest recognized five Veterans organizations to share the proceeds from this event. Our fellow organizations that were honored were: Combat Hero Bike Build, Operation Rebuild Hope, Paws Assisting Veterans (PAVE), and Western Oregon University's Veteran Scholarship Fund. Following the event, each organization was presented with \$2,481.00 each to support their continued services. We were humbled and honored to be chosen as a beneficiary on this important night.

**Photo:** Morgan White (*Mental Health Counselor*), Nancy Pine (*Case Manager*), Jim Stackhouse (*Senior Case Manager*), Ray Powers (*Director*)



**Our Future is So Bright!**

By Beverlyn Coleman, *Clinical Program Director*

WestCare Pacific Islands' (WPI) school-based youth behavioral health program, **Ma'lak Na Ha'ani - Bright Futures**, is happy to announce its expansion to community-based services in January 2022!

WPI was recently awarded the **National Child Traumatic Stress Initiative (NCTSI)** grant funded by the **Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)**. This grant allows Bright Futures to expand its scope of services and embrace a service model that will increase linkages to our community partners as well as provide vital mental health services to youth who are receiving multi-agency support.

In the next couple of months, the amazing Bright Futures team will continue providing school-based mental health services to its three school sites and

prepare for a transition into a community-based program. While it has been a true pleasure to work with the faculty and staff at our school sites, our mission continues to propel us forward in expanding our program's reach in hopes of touching and shaping the lives of our island youth.

We are so grateful for the support, challenges, celebrations, and experiences. Over the past 16 months, the unwavering commitment of the Bright Futures team has proven to be the true foundation of the program. Whenever it felt like there was an obstacle at each turn, they remained focused on the program's purpose. Armed with an endless amount of resiliency and dedication as we look ahead and beyond, our team will continue instilling a sense of hope for a Brighter Future for Guam's youth!



Continue the journey online



WestCare Pacific Islands



@westcare.pi



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**Outreach on Wheels - Guara Bi Natiao**

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

On October 19, **Guara Bi** was very pleased to start a new outreach project with funding from the Department of the Family, **Guara Bi Natiao**. In the native language of Taino, Natiao means "friends" and that's exactly what we would like to achieve. We hope to befriend all of the homeless citizens in our communities by reaching out, uplifting their spirits, and offering them a better way of life.

Three campers are fully equipped to offer case management, medical support, and other services to the areas with the highest homeless populations. Two physicians, four case managers, four social workers, and other personnel will compose the staff in charge of this new project. We wish Guara Bi Natiao all the success in this new venture. Good luck to all involved!







## Reaching Out

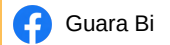
By Yolanda Gonzalez Malave, Program Assistant & HR Coordinator

As part of our commitment to our communities, our **Guara Bi Yara Ri** outpatient treatment and **Guara Bi Bartolo Joy** long-term care programs provided outreach in the municipality of Vega Baja with the goal of assisting those who are living on the streets and/or have a substance use disorder.

Our staff were joined by officers on behalf of the **Puerto Rico Police Department's (PRPD) Return to Life** program as well as the PRPD's Secretary. Everyone put their best efforts into finding those who were willing to receive treatment by offering an orientation about our treatment, case management and other supportive services offered in coordination with local government and other agencies.



Follow the journey online



## Ribbon Cutting for WestCare Tennessee's Newest Program

Wire Article by Steven Lloyd, *The Standard Banner*

## Drug Abuse Prevention Discussed During Red Ribbon Week

Wire Article by Matt Winter, *The Newport Plain Talk*

**WestCare**, a behavioral health services company, held a ribbon cutting at their new facility in Dandridge on Tuesday, October 26. They will be providing outpatient care for those with drug and alcohol problems and for family members dealing with these issues.

Pictured above from left (front row) are: Dandridge Administrator Matt Rudder; Chamber of Commerce board member Julie Livesay; WestCare personnel Lisa Piffner, Makayla Barrett, Shandi Hill, Renee Salyers, Stephen Wright, Dr. Jason Engel, Ross Wells, Lisa Smith, Emily Hoffner, and Ret Col. Craig Kneirim.

In back, from left, are: Dandridge Mayor George Gantte, Chamber Chair David Longmire; WestCare's Darrell Moody; WestCare CEO Richard Steinberg, WestCare's Josh Gibson, and Chamber Interim President Diondre Jackson.

Students at **Northwest Elementary** recently participated in drug abuse prevention activities associated with **Red Ribbon Week**.

The Red Ribbon Campaign is the largest drug abuse prevention campaign in the United States. Northwest joined schools all over the country in reminding students that usage of drugs, alcohol and tobacco are not healthy choices.

Representatives from **WestCare** came to the school to share information with students on drug abuse awareness, while also providing some fun take-home materials.

Grades K-4 were treated to story time and read the book "*Timbi talks about Addiction.*" Students got to take home their own copy of the book and stuffed animal. Older students at the school were given goody bags filled with fun informational items focusing on drug abuse prevention.

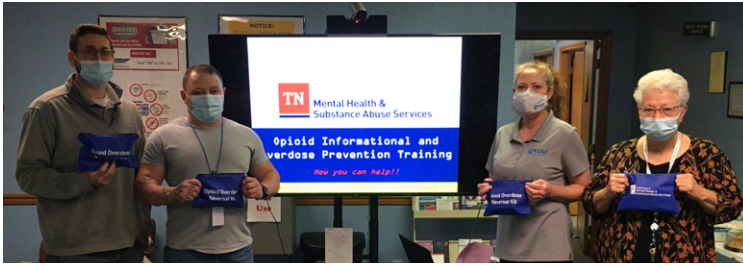


WestCare Tennessee



@WestCareTN

## Kudos to our Tennessee Team!



We'd like to send Kudos out to **Catherine Brunson**, Regional Overdose Prevention Specialist (ROPS) on behalf of **ASAP of Anderson**, for leading a recent training on the use of NARCAN nasal spray for opioid use disorders at our Harriman office and to **Josh Gibson**, **Donnie Ryans**, and **Betty Moore** for attending!

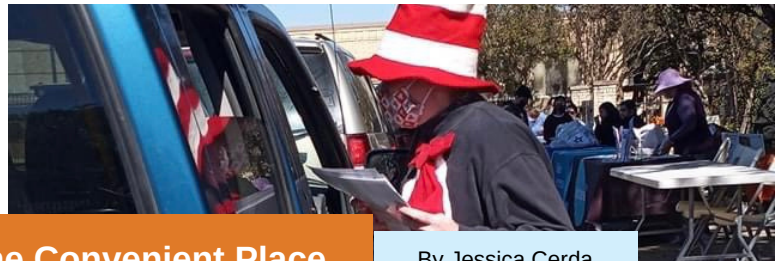


We'd like to recognize "Nurse" **Renee Salyers**, Regional Administrator for WestCare Tennessee and "Good Witch" **Shandi Hill**, Project Coordinator for Drug Free Community – Prevention Alliance of Cocke County (P.A.C.C.) for celebrating the Halloween spirit while also spreading awareness during Red Ribbon Week!



### Bringing Life-Saving Services to One Convenient Place

By Jessica Cerda



In the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, the team at **WestCare Texas** San Antonio forged great partnerships to save lives and provide relief in the face of disparities and disenfranchisement in the Eastside neighborhood and neighboring lower-socioeconomic ranked zip codes where WestCare is based. Local statistics showed that low-income Hispanic and African American communities were being hit the hardest by COVID-19. In addition, community members were struggling to acquire basic resources such as disinfectant cleaning supplies, masks, and hand sanitizers that were in short supply at the time.

Donations of blood and convalescent plasma were at an all-time low, so we partnered with the **South Texas Blood & Tissue Center** to bring their mobile unit to the community for the first time since the pandemic began in order to collect COVID-19 convalescent plasma donations from the demographic who needed it the most. These ongoing blood drives helped to provide life-saving plasma for many in San Antonio, Bexar County, and South Texas.

*"At the time, COVID-19 convalescent plasma was the only thing helping people who were critically ill recover from COVID-19. Our goal was to save lives but also help nurture a practice among community members to give blood on a regular basis,"* said Beverly Watts-Davis, Senior Vice President of WestCare Texas.

The **WestCare Community Blood Drive and Drive-Thru Resource Fair** has evolved to provide many more healthcare and community services that are free and open to the public. This October, WestCare partnered with the **San Antonio Police Officers Association** to sponsor a fall pumpkin patch complete with a photo booth and free jack-o-lantern pumpkins for the kids, families, and participants to enjoy. The **San Antonio Police Department's SAFFE (San Antonio Fear Free Environment)** officers were present as well as WestCare's neighborhood networkers who dispersed dusk to dawn light bulbs as a crime prevention tool to keep neighborhood porch lights efficiently and safely lit.

*"The Resource Fair is all about the needs of our community. Having our SAFFE officers present is just as important as having life-saving health screenings and services,"* said Costella Green, Vice President of WestCare Texas. *"It gives our police officers facetime with the community that they serve and allows both community and police officers the opportunity to discuss questions and concerns without a 911 phone call."*

Resources and services included COVID-19 testing, vaccines, and booster shots; influenza vaccines for children and adults; kidney health screenings; HIV/hepatitis testing; fresh produce bags provided by the San Antonio Food Bank; PPE; and bags filled with local resource and healthcare information.



WestCare Texas





## Advancing Digital Equity for Aging and Low-Income Veterans

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

The COVID-19 pandemic with its resulting growth of teleservices and telehealth has highlighted a mounting crisis in our country referred to as digital equity. Simply put, it represents an increasing segment of our nation's population that is unable to equally participate in the essential 21st-century information and services superhighway - the internet.

For many people experiencing this digital divide, there is often a combination of individual barriers contributing to their challenges. These include a variety of human conditions such as lower incomes, impaired health, sensory disabilities, and social isolation - all of which are feeding this digital chasm. Additionally, each subsequent generation of more advanced communication devices offering the latest in what's new tends to deepen this divide as our older devices head towards extinction.

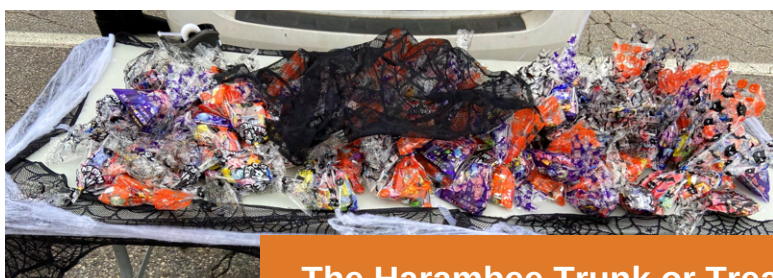
Data available from Washington State confirms that Medicaid claims for remote mental health

appointments were almost nonexistent before COVID-19, but have climbed sharply to nearly 300,000 per month during the pandemic. While people of all ages benefited from accessing telehealth services, the number of Medicaid claims for adults age 65 and older highlighted a disturbingly smaller use compared to other age groups. **WestCare Washington (WCWA)/ WAServes** began addressing the digital equity divide in 2019 when it teamed up with **Timberland Regional Library, American Legion Post 227, and Lacey Veterans Services Hub** to launch the Veterans Connection Café Program at multiple rural libraries.

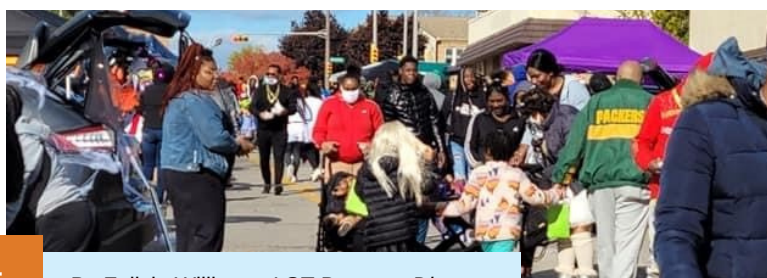
To build on the success of this program while continuing to advance digital equity, WCWA is now proud to participate in a pilot project with Comcast and Operation Military Family (OMF). The pilot will address three facets to equitable connectivity: 1) *Network cost*, 2) *Client hardware* and 3) *Personalized internet and tech assistance*.

Comcast was a recipient of the **Emergency Broadband Benefit** grant and will be providing the pilot program with low/no cost internet services, 100 new laptops for eligible participants, one-on-one technology ambassadors to assist participating Veterans, donations to support host sites, messaging assistance, materials, and compensation to OMF and WCWA for staff planning and community outreach.

WCWA is excited to team with these partners to promote digital equity for low-income and disabled Veterans. Among our shared goals are to create a successful pilot program that can be readily replicated to other populations served by Comcast and enroll a significant number of participating Veterans in comprehensive case management services offered by WAServes



## The Harambee Trunk or Treat



By Felicia Williams, *LST Program Director*

**Northcott Neighborhood House, WestCare Wisconsin, and Bader Philanthropies** wanted to do something special for the families in the Harambee community. By working together, the **Harambee Trunk or Treat** was created. The weather was a bit frightful, but there were brave little angels, ghosts, seasoned seniors, and many other characters that made it a success. There were well over 1,000 residents who came out to show their support and have a safe trunk or treat for their family. We'd like to send shout outs to the 50 vendors who decorated their vehicles to provide candy to the residents. **The Black Cowboys Association** was even present providing horse rides to our little characters. We'd also like to thank the **Milwaukee Police Department's Mounted Patrol Unit** for ensuring that the event remained family friendly and full of fun!



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## Grants & Resource Development



### Grant Professional Association's Annual Conference

By Lisa J. Matzner, *Grant Development Officer*

From November 3 – 6, the **Grants Department** had the opportunity to attend the **Grant Professional Association's Annual Conference** in Seattle, WA for career development, and professional growth. As part of the conference, we also had the honor of seeing our colleague, Lisa Jackson, GPC, Interim Vice President of Grants for WestCare Foundation, get recognized for her amazing work! She received the **2021 Grant Professionals Certification Institute's (GPCI) President's Award** in recognition of her work to foster and further the GPCI's mission, growth, and continued development. When asked for comment, Lisa remarked, *"The conference is a wonderful way to keep up to date on this fast paced profession. I have had the privilege to be involved with an affiliate of GPA for years and was honored at this conference with the GPCI President's Award. This group is dedicated to measuring and promoting competency within the field and it is flattering to be chosen to receive this award."*

The Grant Professional Association (GPA) is an international membership association for everyone in the grants industry. GPA helps grant professionals seek to continually improve their professional knowledge and skills in grant research, proposal development, and post-award grant management. They set the standard with a commitment to ethical practices, high-quality educational offerings, excellence in resources, and creating a community of professionals committed to serving the public good. The GPA Conference is a combination of keynote speakers and break-out workshop sessions.

This year's conference theme was **Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI)**, bringing to light multiple ways organizations can develop DEI principles into everyday practices. More funders, including the federal government, are asking how organizations are assessing and improving DEI within their agencies. WestCare's DEI committee and subsequent Diversity Townhall Meetings and appointment of a Chief Diversity Officer shows that WestCare understands the need for DEI and is willing to do the work necessary to get there. Expect to incorporate DEI practices into your next projects when working with your Grant Development Officers on upcoming grant proposals.

While attending a conference virtually is much different from attending in person, the GPA made a valiant effort to create space for virtual networking conversations and community-building sessions. Working in the grants profession can be isolating as the bulk of our work is done sitting alone with a computer writing about sometimes distant locations, facilities we have never entered, and populations with which we may not have direct experience. Thus, spending days interacting with hundreds of professionals doing similar work was very empowering and full of understanding, exemplifying the importance of DEI in every aspect of nonprofit work.

Overall, the conference was a privilege to attend. Workshop subjects included everything from understanding new U.S. Census data and building Logic Models, to avoiding burnout and preparing for retirement. Personally, the four-day experience renewed my pride in working in the grant profession, allowed me to refresh my skills, and to better understand my role in Uplifting the Human Spirit.



# Information Technology



## Shopping Online Securely

Wire Article by Mark Orlando as published in the SANS Institute's November 2021 Issue of the OUCH! Newsletter

The holiday season is nearing. Soon millions of people will be looking to buy the perfect gifts, and many of us will shop online. Unfortunately, cyber criminals will be active as well, creating fake shopping websites and other online shopping scams to steal your information or money. Learn how you can find good deals without becoming a victim.

### Fake Online Stores

Criminals create fake online stores that mimic the look of real sites or use the names of well-known stores or brands. When you search for the best online deals, you may find yourself at one of these fake sites. By purchasing from such websites, you can end up with counterfeit or stolen items, or your purchases might never be delivered. Take the following steps to protect yourself:

- When possible, purchase from online stores you already know, trust, and have done business with previously. Bookmark these online stores.
- Be suspicious of ads or promotions on search engines or social media that are significantly lower than those you see at the established online stores. If a deal sounds too good to be true, it may be a scam.
- Be careful with websites that have no way to contact them, broken contact forms, or use personal email addresses.
- Be suspicious if a website looks just like one you've used in the past, but the website domain name or the name of the store is different. For example, you may be used to shopping at Amazon, whose website address is [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com), but end up at a fake website that looks similar, but has the website address [www.amazonshoppers.com](http://www.amazonshoppers.com).
- Type the name of the online store or its web address into a search engine to see what others have said about it. Look for terms like "fraud," "scam," "never again," and "fake."
- Protect your online accounts by using a unique, strong password for each of your accounts. Can't remember all your passwords? Consider storing them all in a password manager.

### Scammers on Legitimate Websites

Keep your guard up even when shopping at trusted websites. Online stores often offer products sold by third-parties - different individuals or companies - that might have fraudulent intentions. Such online destinations are like real-world markets, where some sellers are more trustworthy than others.

- Check each seller's reputation before placing the order by reading their reviews.
- Be wary of sellers who are new to the online store, lack reviews, or who sell items at unusually low prices.
- Review the online store's policy on purchases from such third parties.
- When in doubt, purchase items sold directly by the online store, not by the third-party sellers that participate in its online marketplace.
- Even with legitimate vendors, be sure that you understand the seller's warranty and return policies before you make your purchase.

### Online Payments for Purchases

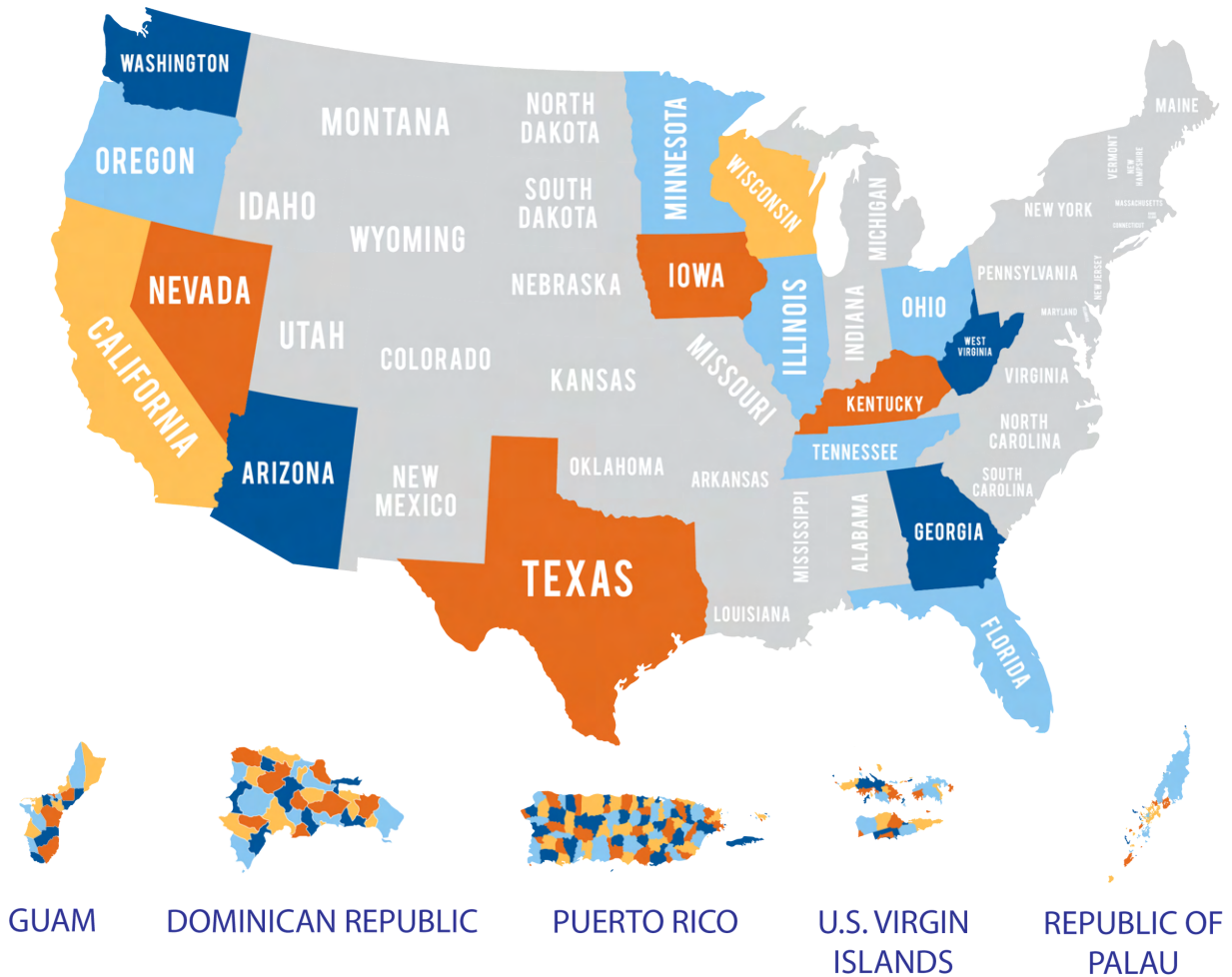
Regularly review your credit card statements to identify suspicious charges. If possible, enable the option to notify you by email, text, or app when a charge is made. If you find any suspicious activity, report it to your credit card company immediately. Use credit cards instead of debit cards for online payments. Debit cards take money directly from your bank account; if fraud is committed, you'll have a much harder time getting your money back. Electronic payment services or e-wallets such as PayPal are also a safer option for online purchases, since they do not require you to disclose a credit card number to the vendor. Avoid websites that only accept payment in cryptocurrency or require obscure payment methods.

Just because an online store has a professional look does not mean it's legitimate. If the website makes you uncomfortable, don't use it. Instead, head to a well-known site you can trust or have safely used in the past. You may not find that incredible deal, but you are much more likely to avoid getting scammed.

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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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