



THE LOOP

A COLLECTION OF STORIES FROM AROUND CALIFORNIA

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WE STAND WITH YOU

WestCare Family.

In June, we celebrate **Father's Day** and our appreciation for our fathers or the fatherly figures in our lives. As part of an annual tradition here at WestCare, we have shared Father's Day sentiments from our California staff! I hope that you've had a chance to view those and read about all the amazing men and women who were recognized! On that note, I would like to share a sentiment about my stepfather, Jim.

My stepfather raised me from the age of two and legally adopted me when I was 12 years old. He is the one that I think of when asked about my father. I always knew he loved me and I freely tell people that he was the father that he didn't have to be. He wasn't perfect, but what father is? All that mattered to me is that he was mine and I loved him. He taught me to work hard, admit my shortcomings/mistakes and stand up for myself and my beliefs. I have tried to emulate his positive traits and learn from his mistakes to be a better father. Thanks to the love that I received and the lessons he taught me, it has helped shape me into the man that I am today. My father knew it was his job to prepare me for the day when he was no longer here and even though I didn't think that I was ready for that day, he knew I was and would be okay.

Dad, I love you, miss you, and know that you hear me when I communicate with you. I know that when it's my time, we will see each other again, but until that day, I will continue to prepare my children in the same way that you prepared me - so that I too will know that they will be fine without me.

I'd also like to recognize the fathers we serve and our staff who are fathers themselves. Your gifts of time, patience, and guidance to your loved ones should always be celebrated and never taken for granted. For all that you do, we thank you.

We'd also like to thank all of our women of the armed forces for what they do and their service to our country. June 12th marked **Women Veterans Day** and in commemoration, we are proud to feature sentiments regarding this holiday on behalf of the staff of our **SJVV HomeFront transitional living Grant and Per Diem (GPD)** program as well as a special arts and crafts activity that they held to celebrate it!

In closing, thank you for all that you do for your fellow staff and those that we serve. Through our work and the positive examples that we set, we play a considerable part in making this world a better and more equitable place for everyone.

Until next time, stay safe and take care,



Shawn L. Jenkins
Deputy COO - Western Region



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June is a critical month of awareness

Pride Month is an annual celebration of the LGBTQIA+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, and asexual) community. On June 27, 1969, a police raid at New York City's Stonewall Inn started a series of protests and actions that today are known as the Stonewall Riots. One year after the Stonewall Riots was the first Pride celebration. Since then, Pride continues to be a protest and a way to stay visible in communities against the harassment and repression that the LGBTQIA+ community faces.

Black Lives Matter (BLM) began in 2013 as a movement dedicated to fighting racism and anti-Black violence. Started as a result of the wrongful death of Trayvon Martin, BLM is dedicated to fighting racism and anti-Black violence, challenging the status quo, and bringing forth policy reform. At its core, BLM is a peaceful movement that calls for ensuring that racial bias and profiling play no part in the questioning, apprehension, treatment, or safety of individuals of color.

At WestCare, we see how these two movements draw strength from one another. As a provider of behavioral health and human services, we continue to stand with our LGBTQIA+ and Black communities in pushing for acceptance, inclusiveness and equality.

Program Spotlight: BEAT (Behavioral Education and Treatment)



"BEAT (Behavioral Education And Treatment) is a Targeted Capacity Expansion (TCE) grant funded by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) that works with individuals who are HIV positive or at high risk of contracting it and have a substance abuse and/or co-occurring disorder. We primarily serve LGBTQ+ individuals, racial/ethnic minorities who identify as Young Men Who Have Sex with Men (YMSM), intravenous drug users, and individuals involved in risky behaviors such as sex industry work, unprotected sex, and human trafficking. Our program's goal is to reduce the link between substance abuse and the transmission of HIV/HCV while empowering those that we serve to live drug-free, healthy and productive lives. Program results are achieved through a combination of intensive residential, outpatient and recovery residence services." – **Carlene Mendez, Program Coordinator, BEAT**

Our services include:

- HIV/HCV testing
- Mental Health Counseling
- Case management with linkage to care
- Residential and outpatient and sober living services
- Health education and harm reduction



Wish list

Support the BEAT program by donating any of the following new/package items

- Underwear
- Bras
- Socks
- Razors
- Toothbrushes
- Toothpaste
- Lotion
- Q-Tips/Cotton swabs
- Deodorant

Contact **Carlene Mendez**
(559-265-4800 Ext. 20333) or **Jojo Alonzo** (559-265-4800 Ext. 20171) if you would like to support.



Brisa Mendoza, Care Navigator, BEAT

Brisa has been a part of the BEAT team since January of 2020. She quickly acclimated to her role and is continuously evolving herself and her position for the benefit of our participants. She works consistently and diligently to identify and address the needs of our consumers while demonstrating great compassion, encouragement, and understanding of their situations. We look forward to her continued growth and commitment with our team!

Andrea's Story with BEAT



"I came into a recovery treatment center for the fourth time in hopes of learning new tools to assist in the recovery of my alcohol addiction. What I gained was so much more than that. I want to share with you a little of my journey through this program and how the support of the **BEAT (Behavioral Education And Treatment) program** and LGBTQ group meetings have helped me turn over a new stone in my recovery path. Going into a treatment center for recovery for one's addiction(s) is not an easy thing to do. I came into WestCare with the hope that I could learn how to stay sober, but what I gained was so much more.

I was invited to be a part of the BEAT program and immediately felt at home. I attended my classes as a part of my regular program. In addition to those classes, I was attending weekly BEAT meetings and LGBTQ group meetings. These introduced me to the BEAT staff who I would find out quickly to be like the bonus family that I never knew I wanted.

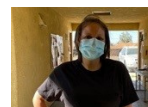
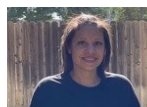


My alcoholism has taken me to some very dark and sad places, temporarily put me in a wheelchair, taken from me my mobility, career, marriage, and many, many more things. But, despite all of the negative things I could say about my addiction, I choose to be grateful today.

I choose this because, without it, I would have never had the opportunity to learn the life skills that recovery teaches, get to know the amazing people that I have met, and become a part of a community that encompasses all. I have learned many things as I have been working on my recovery and the most important thing is to surround yourself with supportive people that are going to propel you in the right direction. That is the embodiment of the BEAT program.

Having BEAT's team assist me with my journey has been a huge help. They help me remember that I am not alone in this. I have amazing people that support me in my recovery and now that I am in a recovery residence, I know that I can still call on them to help me navigate the next steps. I am nowhere near where I want to be, but I am well on my way and thanks to WestCare's BEAT team, I have some great traveling partners."

Celebrating Women Veterans Day



To commemorate Women Veterans Day, the women of our **SJVV HomeFront Grant and Per Diem (GPD) transitional living program** made and decorated their own flag stands to reflect their respective branches of the military! On behalf of the WestCare family of programs, thank you for your time, sacrifices, and service to our country! We salute you!

COMING
UP IN
JULY

- Minority Mental Health Awareness Month
- Make a Difference to Children Month
- 25th: National Parents Day
- 26th: National Aunt & Uncle Day
- 28th: World Hepatitis Day
- 30th: International Day of Friendship

Let's continue building healthy minds & relationships

Save the date! CP4R Presents Celebrate Recovery Month

SoberStock XVI

September 25, 2021 - Virtual Edition, A Streaming Video Event

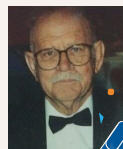
FRESNO

AIDS



WALK

10.23.21 VIRTUALLY



HAPPY FATHER'S DAY



"My father is an awesome example of patience, love, and grace. Although I have not mastered these attributes, I am thankful to have a father who is a great example and support for me. I love you, Daddy." – **Kimberly Baker, Family Counseling Specialist, SJVV - Fresno**

"My grandparents raised me with a strong work ethic. My grandpa would say, 'Those cows won't milk themselves.' My grandma taught 6th, 7th, and 8th grade while she was the principal for 40+ years. She also taught me to give back." – **Andrea Borge, Case Manager, STOP Area 1: North Highlands**

"I will always be there for him even in his mental health struggles. I will keep seeing him and trying to show him I care as it's been a very long journey since my mom passed. It has changed my personality and given me more grace and patience. He means to me: Watching Jean Claude Van Damme and other action movies as a kid, listening to great music, learning about God and knowing that my dad loves me a great deal." – **Joslynn Davis, Community Service Specialist, STOP Area 3: Fresno**

"He was the hardest working man ever. He owned his own construction company, was gone when I went off to school, and came home after dark to provide for his family without a complaint. He never missed a game, cheerleading event, or other school things. He loved to camp, go fishing, and race boats - summers were the best. He loved his kids for all that they were including their faults. He used to say, 'You're my kid for sure, hippie kid!'" – **Felicia Lippen, Case Manager, STOP Area 1: Chico**

"My Father has ALWAYS been here for me, even when no one else was... Even when he was showing me tough love, I felt loved. He has taught me to be the strong person that I am today. Not only is he an amazing, hardworking father, but he is also the most amazing grandfather who has been my son's father figure since birth! Thanks to my dad, my son is growing into such an amazing young man. I love my dad more than words could ever say!" – **Leslie Posey, Counselor Tech, MLK Residential**

"Thank you, Daddy, for everything that you do for me!" – **Osiris Almaraz, Administrative Assistant, WestCare Adolescent Services**

"My Pop was the world to me and I miss him every day." – **Arthur Thompson, Educator, SJVV - Stockton**

"My dad was a tall, strong man, who scared all of our friends growing up. That is until they met him and found out that he was warm-hearted, kind, loving, and would always extend his hand to strangers as he knew them forever. To me, my dad was the one who always let me know everything was going to be okay and that no matter what, he will always love me. The day eventually came when his Alzheimer's made him forget my name. But, just before he passed away, he looked at me and said, 'I'm glad I don't have to worry about you anymore.' I had 20 years clean at that time and I will never forget those words. I miss you, Daddy." – **LeeAnn Girardeau, Admissions Specialist III, Fresno Admissions**

"My dad was in the Navy for 21 years and then became a single dad to my two older brothers and me when I was in middle school. He was also in college at the time. He showed me and my brothers what it means to give everything for your family, your country, your education, and your career. I learned my work ethic from him." – **Jessica Holthouser, Bookkeeper, CCTRP - San Diego**

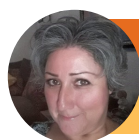
"My father, Luis R. Besas, means everything to me. He shaped my mind to believe in myself and he told me once, 'Your beauty becomes you.' He was a very kind father, was upright, and a great provider who sacrificed to work hard for us his four children. I will never forget my dear Papa. We love him forever even though he has passed away." – **Desiree Jacobs, Mental Health Clinician/Therapist, Fresno Outpatient**

"This will be my first Father's Day without my superman, but I will always be grateful for the 40 years that I was blessed with my dad. He has always been my biggest cheerleader in life and believed in me more than anyone. He taught me to be the best that I could be in whatever I chose to do." – **Mary Ann Knox, Deputy Administrator, Administration**

"He is my joy, my strength, and my rock." – **Tenisha Kpakarogers, Cook, Richmond Health and Wellness Center**

"My father promotes strength, leads by example, has always been supportive, and is a hard worker." – **Jenny Magdaleno, Program Director, MLK Residential**

"My dad is my rock, my hero y mi querido viejo. I can only hope to have his strength, will, and drive - as well as his rebellious spirit!" – **Gabriela Espinosa-McNiel, Director of Marketing, Administration**



Reflections from HomeFront GPD

By Linda Cater, Family Service Specialist, SJVV - HomeFront

"Whether it's the U.S. Marines, Army, Navy, Air Force, National Guard or Coast Guard - I have seen them all walk through the front gate at HomeFront at one time or another.

We all have come through the gate the same. We have been under distress, we are tired, hungry, unsure about our future and unsure who we can trust. Yet, we are not ready to give up! Our will to survive keeps us going strong.

HomeFront is a Transitional Living Grant and Per Diem (GPD) program for Veteran women and their children who are experiencing homelessness or are at risk of homelessness. HomeFront's staff assists each Veteran in identifying barriers that prevent stable housing and helping them in overcoming obstacles. But with any hardship - it takes heart to see it through.

You're going to work harder here than you've ever worked anywhere else. And the only thing I ask from you is ganas. Desire. ...If you don't have the ganas, I will give it to you. - Jaime Escalante, 'Stand and Deliver' (1988)

This time, the battle is within us because we cannot hide in our own shadows anymore - not if we want to overcome our obstacles. We know in recovery that this is not easy! We are now back on the block and back in a new style of bootcamp.

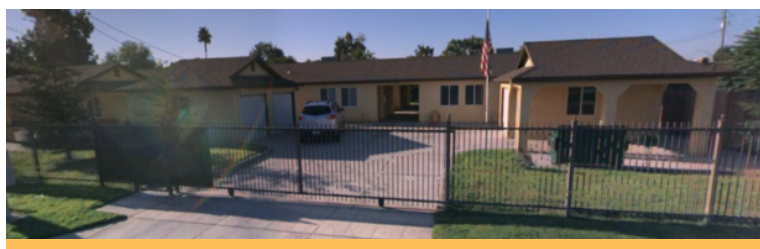
This bootcamp does not have to strip you of who you are because we already feel like we have been stripped of our dignity. Instead, this bootcamp starts with compassion and a chance for a new beginning. This new bootcamp is where we find community, encouragement and inspiration that raises

the spirit as each woman Veteran boosts themselves up and understands how important the simple things are that make life worthwhile.

My life shares both sides of the desk. My introduction to WestCare was as a homeless Vet in 2013 and HomeFront was a gift from God! Coming out of my shadow was scary and difficult, but inevitable. There were just no shortcuts! Each time that I tried a new shortcut, the direction took me back to the same spot. That spot was me staring into my own mirror, wanting to hide. The cycle continued until I realized that the change must start within myself if I really wanted to boost myself up.

So, I began to believe. With the courage to stare into my own mirror, I did. I might have done it at times with only one eye opened or while wailing in tears, but I still did it and I still believed. Even today, I still do it. I stare into my own mirror and look within myself, finding that resistance and asking why.

Now, I sit on the other side of the desk looking across at my sisters hoping to also see that inner light to shine. At times, we cry together, we celebrate, we question and we try to understand how important the simple things are that make life worthwhile. Instead of going against the wind, we now go with the wind."



Celebrating amazing people

Retirements



Anna Champ
Case Manager
Supportive Overnight Stay



Art Valdivia
CBT Facilitator/AOD Counselor
Day Reporting Center

Thank you for your seven years of service!
Your kindness and dedication to building trust while motivating clients will be missed - especially since you were always the first one to work!

Thank you for your fourteen years of service!
We are so happy you've achieved your dream of retiring to Mexico. Your creativity, fun attitude and knowledge will be missed by all in our groups!

CORE Award Recipients



January 2021: Encouragement
• Mary Greene, Women's Coordinator, MLK Residential



March 2021: Customer Service
• Hassan Driver, Unit Clerk, MLK Residential



February 2021: Dedication
• Benjamin Hernandez, Social Media Specialist, Administration



April 2021: Above and Beyond
• Elisha Simpson, W2W SOD, MLK Residential

Promotions



Michelle Allen is the new Director of Contract Compliance!



Erin Shelton is the new Fresno HUD CES Program Manager!



Samuel Alonzo is the new Program Coordinator of Bakersfield Residential!

Kudos



Media appearances help us share our WestCare story to audiences who may not know about our services. Giving a big kudos to **Maryann Knoy**, Deputy Administrator, **Maria Rodriguez**, Director of Housing Services, **Dr. Herbert Cruz**, Medical Director, and **Jenny Gonzalez**, Director of Veterans Services and Adolescent Treatment Services, for doing interviews in Spanish on **Azteca America**, **Estrella TV**, and **Acento Comunitario**. We will post the segments on our social media pages when available.

JOB OPENINGS

Stockton

- Case Manager - STOP 3

Fresno - MLK

- Counselor Tech - MLK
- Certified Counselor - MLK

Fresno - Housing Services

- Program Manager, Opening Doors
- Case Manager, Home Safe
- Navigator - HEAP

Fresno - Administration

- Clinical Services Director
- Administrative Assistant

Hanford

- Outreach Specialist - SJVV

San Diego

- Clinical Manager LMFT
- Overnight Substance Abuse Facility Monitor

View all open positions at: careers.westcare.com

Read everyone's Juneteenth messages on our Facebook page!



Pandemic Habits Worth Keeping

By Dr. Herbert Cruz, MD, Medical Director, Administration

I recently read an article by Gael Cooper that boasted 32 activities that the COVID-19 pandemic taught us. In reviewing it, I was able to glean some actual habits that I believe are worth developing both as a person and as a member of a family such as WestCare's. Although not intended to be all-inclusive, these are behaviors that not only can serve you well in a pandemic - they are just good practices that can allow us all to enhance our daily function and not get caught broadside in the event of any trial or tribulation that may befall us. They contribute to overall health and wellness and provide the opportunity to self-reflect. Rather than just looking at the list and saying, "Cool," perhaps it is worth printing out, posting, and crossing out items as you accomplish them. Then, after most of them are crossed out, start with a clean list and repeat.

1. Stocking up for emergencies (Food, meds, masks, water)
2. Adopting home exercise routines (sit-ups, pushups)
3. Checking on neighbors and friends (maintaining a broader social circle)
4. Washing hands thoroughly and often (hygiene)
5. Getting back to the garden
6. Disconnecting from TV and enjoying games, books, and jigsaw puzzles
7. Video chats (with family and friends)
8. Taking an online course (mind-enhancing activities)
9. Deep cleaning (and decluttering)
10. Rediscovering self-care (meditation, relaxation, celebration)
11. Rediscovering the neighborhood (regular walks, fresh air)
12. Wearing a mask in public
13. Using virtual and telemedicine
14. Working from home

To read the full list of 32 habits, [click here!](#)

Connect with us in California

Get in touch with our Marketing Department to learn more about what is happening in WestCare California at marketing@westcare.com