



THE LOOP

A COLLECTION OF STORIES FROM AROUND CALIFORNIA

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The Month of May often brings to mind thoughts of Mother's Day and the love, appreciation, and admiration that we have for our mothers or the motherly figure in our lives. As part of an ongoing tradition, we are once again proud to share Mother's Day sentiments from our California staff as they are truly precious! For example, on the best days, my mother smiled and laughed with me. On the worst days, she cried with me. She was not perfect, but she was mine and never failed to show up for me. She was my rock and I was her baby boy. I was and will always be honored to call her mom.

We'd also like to send our warmest regards to our mothers that we serve as well as our staff who are mothers themselves. The gift of time, patience, and nurturing that you provide to your little one/s is an absolute blessing that should never go without praise. For all that you do, we thank you.

May is also known for **Mental Health Awareness Month** and **Military Appreciation Month** as well as a host to several military observances that include Memorial Day, Military Spouse Appreciation Day, and Armed Forces Day. As a provider of behavioral health and human services, this makes it a crucial month of awareness that pertains to two of our service domains: Mental Health and Veterans Services.

In commemoration, we have featured several features in this issue that recognize these observances such as a collage of our staff with their mental health pledges on Page 2, and a program spotlight on page 3 for our Crisis Psychiatry Response Services (CPRS) program in Madera! We'd like to thank our various staff and members of leadership who have played a part in making these pieces possible!

It goes without saying that the topic of mental health has a strong connection with so much that we address through our services whether it's regarding individuals that are experiencing co-occurring disorders or our Veterans who

have served our country with resulting trauma due to the conditions that they faced. As an organization, we recognize that mental health conditions can affect everyone including ourselves and our families and encourage open and honest discussions about our mental well-being in hopes that in time, the act of reaching out for help will no longer be anything to be ashamed of, but instead, a step towards living a happier and more fulfilling life. To our staff within the domain of mental health services and programs with a clinical component, we thank you for your unwavering dedication to those that we serve.

In regards to Veterans, we cannot express our gratitude enough for those who have served, our active duty members and their family who stand by them and those who we may have lost, but will never forget. Every day, our SJVV staff throughout the state from Hanford to Stockton are ensuring that those who have served are not left without support after they have served so selflessly for our country. Thank you all for your great work and dedication! Additionally, to our staff who are Veterans, thank you for your service!

In closing, I would like to thank you for your hard work and for taking the time to read our monthly newsletter! With just four issues to go until issue #100, we are thankful for the opportunity to once again share a glimpse inside our programs and hope that you enjoy what we have to share!

Until next time, stay safe and take care,



Shawn L. Jee
Deputy COO - Western Region



westcare.com

Written by Dr. Herbert Cruz, Medical Director, and Kathy Hayden, Clinical Director.

Crisis Psychiatric Response Services (CPRS, pronounced "Cypress") is a mental health service that has been in operation for seven years. It consists of Licensed Marriage and Family Therapists (LMFT's) and social workers that respond to perform mental health crisis evaluations in the County of Madera. When a community member is brought to the hospital on an involuntary detainment (5150), the crisis worker evaluates the person, determines if they should remain on a hold or whether sufficient time, medical evaluation, and crisis intervention has elapsed to where the client can return home or to another level of care. If the client is to remain on a 5150 basis, the CPRS team member facilitates transfer to a 5150-designated treatment facility. The team responds to crisis situations at Madera Community Hospital, Valley Children's Hospital, and local correctional institutions.



Kudos to Yelena

One member of the CPRS team, **Yelena DeBenedetto**, LMFT, has been with the team since its inception and serves as the lead clinician. She has been committed to the clientele and persons served in a thorough and diligent manner. Yelena ensures strong, efficient, and trouble-free communication with the county behavioral health leadership and makes certain that every shift is covered, even if that means she is called upon to cover extra shifts. Her teammates also share the same dedication and diligence. Under the supervision of Kathy Hayden, LMFT, Yelena and the CPRS team keep watch on and ensure that only the best possible care is provided for the after-hours clients of Madera County!

There are occasions where individuals in the Emergency Department (ED) or the community are not on a hold and the CPRS worker is asked to evaluate them, in which case, these specialty-trained and county-designated individuals are able to write and begin the 5150 process themselves. One important element of the job is to be able to make decisions rapidly and transfer information effectively whether it's from law enforcement who issued the 5150 to ED staff, from those ED staff who then collaborated with hospitals, or from those hospitals who corresponded with Madera County's mental healthcare system.

Although it is a highly rewarding job, the intrinsic nature of crisis work is that our CPRS workers come onto every shift never knowing what to expect. CPRS embodies WestCare's commitment to the person and the community served. This team of four licensed clinicians provides after-hours crisis support 24/7 365, including holidays. Through their diligence and commitment, there has never been a shift gone uncovered in seven years, even when understaffed or throughout the height of the COVID-19 pandemic.



Mental Health Matters
THIS IS OUR PLEDGE.

Throughout the month of May, members of our WestCare California family proudly recognized Mental Health Matters Month with pledges on how they plan to improve their own mental well-being and play a part in ending the stigma surrounding mental illness! Mental health plays a tremendous role in our services and affects each and every one of us in some aspect. Our pledge signs are the first step to having honest conversations with ourselves and our loved ones as we work together to end the stigma and live happier and healthier lives! [Head to our social media pages to read all of our mental health pledges!](#)



CELEBRATING Moms

"You were a great mom. You will be always in my heart. I love you!
05/15/45 - 03/05/2021"

– **Osiris Almaraz, Administrative Assistant, WestCare Adolescent Services**

"There are not enough words to describe the strongest and most compassionate woman that I know. I only hope to be half the woman, wife, and mother she is. I love you, Mama!"

– **Kimberly Baker, Family Counseling Specialist, SJVV - Fresno**

"My mother is patient, has a heart of good and a peaceful soul.
Those who meet her automatically feel her warmth."

– **Marisol Brambila, Admissions Specialist III, Fresno Admissions**

"My mother molded me to be strong, empathetic, and loyal.
In times of trouble, I felt no trouble at all. She was the definition of love."

– **Robert Church, Program Director, CCTRP San Diego**

"My mom is easily the nicest person you will ever meet. I am so lucky God chose her to be my mom and I am trying my very best to deserve her."

– **Gabriela Espinosa-McNiel, Director of Marketing, Administration**

"She was the best encourager that I ever knew. She would help anyone that needed help, especially the lost and broken. I remember her feeding those who didn't have any food."

– **Raymond Gonzales, Outreach Specialist, SJVV – Fresno**

"My mother was an amazing woman. She was so beautiful inside and out. She always saw the positive things in life."

– **Michelle Gregory, Case Manager, STOP Area 1: Chico**

"Mom was always the beacon of stability. She loved me when I forgot to love myself and was where I knew I could go when I felt the world collapsing around me. She was honest, firm and I always knew she had my back and loved me."

– **Shawn Jenkins, Deputy COO, WestCare Foundation – Western Region**

"My stepmom came into my life when I was 13 years old. She taught me love, patience, and countless other things. I wouldn't be where I am today without her and her unconditional love." – **Jessica Holthouser, Bookkeeper, CCTRP – San Diego**

"My mom means the whole world to me. She loves selflessly and unconditionally and has taught me to work hard and fight for what is just."

– **Mary Ann Knoy, Deputy Administrator, Administration**

What does your mother mean to you?: "Everything."

– **Tenisha Kpakarogers, Cook, Richmond Health and Wellness Center**

"My mother is my courage, a positive role model, and a great cook!
Vivo orgullosa de tener una Madre como tu."

– **Jenny Magdaleno, Program Director, MLK Residential**

"My mother is the example of what unconditional love, prayer, patience, and understanding are." – **Teresa McCracken, Case Manager, STOP Area 3: Fresno**

"Mi mama is my best friend. She jokes and roasts me like no other, but I know she will be there for me like no other."

– **Yvette Morales, Journey Advocate, SJVV – Fresno**

"My mother inspires me to be a better person by her example."

– **Arthur Thompson, Educator/Housing Specialist, SJVV – Stockton**

"My mom exemplifies the word COURAGE in every sense of the word. There isn't anything I wouldn't do to make her happy."

– **Raymond Trody, Driver, STOP Area 1: North Highlands**

"My mom survived a war to give my siblings and me a better future. She is the definition of strength and a true survivor."

– **Jenifer Xiong, Disability Advocate, Housing Services**

**NATIONAL
HIV TESTING DAY**

JUNE 27, 2021

**CHECK OUR SOCIAL MEDIA FOR FREE, CONFIDENTIAL
HIV TESTING RESOURCES IN CALIFORNIA**

Save the date! CP4R Presents Celebrate Recovery Month

SoberStock XVII

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

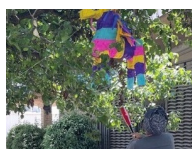
FRESNO

AIDS



WALK

10.23.21 VIRTUALLY



SJVV Fresno Celebrates Cinco de Mayo!

By Tony Calantas, BBM, Veteran Advocate

Cinco de Mayo commemorates the anniversary of Mexico's pivotal victory at the Battle of Puebla on May 5, 1862. This holiday is also often associated with the celebration of Mexico's rich culture. Here at San Joaquin Valley Veterans, we embrace cultural diversity in the workplace and are proud to observe this important observance! So, we decorated the office, had some pan dulce for breakfast, tacos for lunch and ended the afternoon with a pinata!



February 2021 Community Based EOTM: Nancy Montano, Benefits Specialist, Fresno Admissions

"Nancy has been working against an amazing amount of encountered barriers to submit Other Health Coverage claims for a year. Everywhere she turned there was an issue, but she has doggedly persisted to ensure monies are not lost. Beyond the above example, Nancy's passion and giving nature uplift all her co-workers. She has a desire to learn every role and to see how they fit together to keep WestCare running at its best to serve our consumers." – **Mark Leanhart, Program Director, Fresno Admissions and Adult Outpatient**



March 2021 Community Based EOTM: Erin Shelton, Housing Matcher, Housing Services

"Erin has a long history with several of WestCare California's programs and in all of her positions, has always strived for excellence. She is super helpful to the entire Housing Services department and with her experience and knowledge, provides so much support to the entire team. Erin has a smile on her face every day and is the go-to person for all new housing staff. She helps mentor them as they learn about the department." – **Mary Ann Kroy, Deputy Administrator, Administration**



March 2021 Criminal Justice EOTM: Mamie Welch, Residential Counselor, Bakersfield Residential

"Mamie is always willing to step up, grab the reins, and guide her peers on what needs to be accomplished. Mamie has a passion for the population we serve and the need to provide the utmost quality of services to assist them in grasping the skills to use through their of recovery." – **Dwayne Gotay, Program Director, Bakersfield Residential**



CORE Award Recipient

November 2020 CORE Award Recipient - Erika Johnson, ESG Case Manager, Housing Services

We'd like to send our belated congratulations to Erika for being voted by her peers in Housing Services as the recipient of the November 2020 CORE Award for embodying that month's trait of Mentor!

Staff Recognition Our T.E.A.M. Tokens



Katie Tkac, Vocational Specialist, MLK Residential

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



Domenica Jimenez, Case Manager, SOS Specialty Mental Health Clinic

"I have given Domenica a chip for Uplifting the Human Spirit. Today Domenica showed great compassion for client Kimberly. She noticed the client's hair having knots and very unkempt. She offered to assist the client in learning to manage and clean on a regular basis. The client was willing to accept the help. It was really nice to see the client with a smile and obviously feeling special. I want her to know how much she inspires me to help others in more ways than she will ever know. You are awesome Domenica! Thank you for being you!" – **Olivia Amesquita, Personal Service Coordinator, SOS Supportive Overnight Stay**



Albert Rosales, Case Manager, SOS Specialty Mental Health Clinic

In April, Kim Multani, Program Supervisor for our Support Overnight Stay program, presented Albert with a staff recognition token for ensuring that their vehicles were clean so that when it was time to pick up their next clients, they were only giving their best impression! Thank you, Albert!

Fresno - MLK

- Maintenance Engineer
- Counselor Tech - Women's Unit (Multiple Openings)
- Counselor Tech I (Per Diem) - Men's Unit
- Counselor - Men's Unit
- Certified Counselor - Women's Unit
- Peer Support Specialist - SOS
- Certified Counselor - Men's Unit
- Cook

Fresno - Administration

- Director of CA Operations

Fresno - Housing Services

- Case Manager, Opening Doors
- Community Coordinator

Bakersfield

- Counselor - Outpatient (Multiple Openings)
- Counselor (Temporary) - Residential
- Counselor - Residential

San Diego - CCTRP

- Certified Substance Abuse Counselor
- Cook
- Vocational Counselor
- Overnight Substance Abuse Facility Monitor (Temporary)
- Certified Substance Abuse Counselor (Temporary)

Uplifting the Human Spirit

View all open positions at: careers.westcare.com

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