

# WestCare Express

The WestCare Foundation Employee Newsletter



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## United WestCare Serves

By David Rosynsky – *WestCare National AmeriCorps Director*

Earlier this summer, I attended The 2009 National Conference on Volunteering and Service in San Francisco representing WestCare's WeDirect: WestCare Empowers Direct National AmeriCorps program.

Amidst the multitude of children, teens and adults participating in the Obama-sized national service movement, I confess that I was seduced by the roaring crowds, celebrity ambassadors (Governor Schwarzenegger, Maria Shriver, Matthew McConaughey, Representative Nancy Pelosi and Arianna Huffington) and the eloquent straight talk from keynote speaker First Lady Michelle Obama whose remarks were followed by a surprise concert provided by John Bon Jovi.

During Bon Jovi's a capella performance of "Living On A Prayer," I couldn't help but wonder if my WestCare colleagues understood exactly what our organization had gotten itself into. Furthermore, did we grasp that our organization was now part of the national service movement?

During First Lady Obama's presence at the conference in June (which incidentally caused a tripling in the number of attendees at this year's conference) she remarked, "It's been said that our true calling in life is where our hearts' greatest gladness meets the world's deepest need. We all know that our challenges are great and that we've got a long, hard road ahead of us. But standing here today with all of you – people who love this country and have devoted your lives to helping people share in its promise – I feel nothing but hope for our future."

Hearing the passionate chanting of "Yes we can" all around me, witnessing the tearful eyes of many of those who were experiencing this significant moment in the history of national service, I was reminded that WestCare's journey in national service began much earlier in 2006.

It was in 2006 that we began developing the proposal for a modest AmeriCorps program that eventually came to fruition in 2007 as the WestCare WeDirect AmeriCorps National Direct program.

Funded by the Corporation for National and Community Service and through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, WestCare operates WeDirect in five states: California, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky and the U.S. Virgin Islands. Marketed as a hands-on experience in the behavioral health services industry, the program has materialized as something much more than merely an internship in the WestCare national network.



Throughout WestCare, individuals acting as AmeriCorps members each provide 1,700 hours of service within a 12-month period at a WestCare site. In exchange for their service, members are provided with a stipend along with other benefits including healthcare coverage and a federal education award upon completion of their service.

*Feature article: continued from page one*

“Over the past 15 years, AmeriCorps has helped communities across the nation address some of their most challenging problems,” said Nicola Goren, Acting CEO of the Corporation for National and Community Service. The goal of the Corporation is to expand AmeriCorps from 75,000 slots today to 250,000 by 2013.

During her remarks at the conference, First Lady Obama commented on the loss of confidence that many Americans share as they focus on rising unemployment rates, crumbling public-school systems, fluctuating gas prices and the escalating costs of health insurance as approximately 47 million people go uninsured. Many Americans cannot shake the memory of hurricane Katrina or wars that burden the fiscal health of the nation.

“What you do every day isn’t easy even in good times.” remarked Obama, “And in times like these, when we’re facing challenges unlike any in our lifetime, I know it can feel close to impossible. When our economy falters, you’re the ones who deal with the fallout – more folks needing those food pantries; more families needing help to stay in their homes and pay their bills; cities and states cutting services, leaving so many people with nowhere to turn.”

But at the same time that confidence seems to be dwindling, something else is stirring throughout the rural and urban areas of the country. According to a recent Time magazine article, polls show that while confidence in our democracy and our government is near an all-time low, volunteerism and civic participation since the 1970s are near all-time highs. After 9/11, Americans were hungry to be asked to do something, to make some kind of sacrifice, and what they mostly remember is being asked to go shopping. Some economists offer that the reason volunteerism is so high is precisely because confidence in our public institutions is so low.

In June, President Obama launched United We Serve – a call to action for all Americans to volunteer during the summer and be part of building a new foundation for America, one community at a time.

The announcement of the new United We Serve campaign came on the heels of the signing into law of the Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act. Taking affect this fall, the bill re-authorizes the Corporation for National and Community Service

and its programs (including AmeriCorps) to continue operating through 2014.

In December, WestCare will compete once again to extend our AmeriCorps program for another year. With a sweeping expansion of national service planned, competition is predicted to be fierce as more grassroots and well-established organizations



see the value in acquiring national service funding.

At the signing of the Edward M. Kennedy Serve America Act, Obama said, our “government cannot do everything alone,” but needs the help of citizens in local communities everywhere. He also recognized Bill Clinton for launching AmeriCorps during his administration. Obama went on to talk about the long legacy of service contributed by the Kennedy family including Ted Kennedy, for whom the legislation is now named.

During his speech, President Obama reminded us all that national service is not reserved for just the young, but for all citizens – a sentiment that WestCare has taken to heart in the development of its program.

If pressed to choose an adjective that best describes our cadre of AmeriCorps members, I’d have to employ the term “diverse.”

Our membership ranges in age from 23 to 71. Yes, we have our share of college students whom we value as the leaders of the future of both the behavioral health industry and the evolving national service landscape. But our program is also seasoned with veterans, individuals in recovery,

volunteers over the age of 60 and those unabashedly seeking a way to reenter the competitive workforce.

“Rosa Davis has been rearing children for more than a half-century.” That’s the opening line of a recent article in *The True Citizen*, a newspaper serving the area of Waynesboro, Georgia.

Born in 1939, Davis, 71, is a WeDirect AmeriCorps member serving her second term of service at WestCare’s Boggs Intensive Residential Adolescent Boys Treatment Program in Keysville, Georgia. Contrary to the stereotype of the college-aged volunteer, Rosa launched her national service career at the age of 70.

Her AmeriCorps file contains a copy of her birth certificate noting her race as “Negro,” a striking artifact of the time in history in which Rosa was born and a moving symbol of how far we’ve come as a nation, especially at a time when our first African-American President regards national service as a priority.

Rosa began her own family with the birth of her oldest son in 1955. Then, as her children were nearing adulthood, she took in an infant grandchild in 1977. Since then, she has welcomed three other grandchildren and even a great-grandchild into her home to live. Currently, Rosa is raising two teenage grandchildren at her home in Waynesboro.

In September I had the opportunity to spend time with Rosa in Georgia. While Rosa has carved out her tasks at Boggs, perhaps her greatest responsibility is as a grandmother figure to the clients at Boggs.

“This place keeps me busy,” Rosa said about Boggs. “If I didn’t come here every day, I’d just be at home I guess.” She hopes to gift the nearly \$10,000 in education awards she will earn to her eldest grandson so that he can have the opportunity to attend college in the future.

Reflecting on the time spent with Rosa, I pondered if, far removed from the national service spotlight and the celebrity ambassadors, it is AmeriCorps members like this spunky great-grandmother in rural Georgia who will quietly carry the torch of service, using her life, her wisdom and her humor to slowly create the change that Americans so eagerly desire.

# WestCare Gulf Coast Gets a New Home and a New Program!

By Carol Renard – *Director of Program & Staff Development*

The newly acquired 64,000 sq. ft. Davis-Bradley Building in St. Petersburg, Florida is quickly filling up with WestCare Gulfcoast Florida programs. Our Outpatient services have been housed there for four years, and we recently added our Prevention program for adolescents in the community to receive needed services. Our Foundation office has just moved in and they occupy a wing downstairs.

The second floor contains the newly acquired 58-bed men's DOC residential program that we took over on July 1. We have changed the name to "EMERGE," which means "to come out of an experience, condition, or situation, especially a difficult one."

We are working hard to change the former "DOC culture" to a modified therapeutic community through training, modeling and lots of discussion. We have admitted 39 new clients, and 12 have graduated back into their respective communities. Additionally, we have recently added a pre-employment program, which assists the residents to learn the necessary "soft skills," including mock interviewing, presentation and work expectations.

Best of all, the morale of both our new staff and residents has improved. The positive statements about the program are being relayed to judges, probation and family members. We plan to have an open house during the fall to share our



changes and proud accomplishments with the St. Petersburg community, and all counties and referral sources that refer clients to our care.

We invite you all to come to visit us in beautiful St. Petersburg!



## South Florida

## Rally For Recovery on September 12 at Bicentennial Park

Article submitted by South Florida Staff

Village South participated in the Rally for Recovery on September 12 at Bicentennial Park in Miami. This event mobilized the recovery community for a wonderful day of celebration, including a walk/run, music, food and many other events.



Picture from left to right: Denise Estrada and Marina Aviles

# 1st Annual Race for Recovery (Sept. 12)

By Sabrina Pierre, BS – Case Manager

WestCare Augusta joined with eight other local organizations to host the 1st Annual Race for Recovery September 12. The purpose of this event was to bring awareness to substance abuse issues and to raise funds for treatment. We had a total of nine staff and eight residents participate. The event was open to anyone who wanted to participate. Each person who participated received a "Race for Recovery" t-shirt. There was also a performance by a local band called "Vellotones." The 1st Annual Race for Recovery was a true success. The opportunity was presented for us to spread the word about substance abuse recovery and to show our community how we are doing our part. We can only hope that next year this event will be even more of a success.

## Georgia



## Kentucky

# 2009 Annual Recovery Walk – Ashcamp (Sept. 16)

Submitted by WestCare Kentucky staff



Events began at 9 a.m. on Wed Sept. 16th with the first lap being walked by all WestCare Alumni that were present. Residents, Alumni, and staff walked the track on the property for a 24 hour period ending on Thursday Sept. 17 at 9 a.m. Events included a campout, all day/night cookout and outdoor sports of every kind. A total of over 800 (yes 800) miles were walked in a 24 hour period in support of all those in recovery. One resident alone walked a total of 35 miles.

# "One Day at a Time March for Drug Recovery" (Sept. 13)

The 4th Annual One Day at a Time March for recovery from substance abuse was held September 13, 2009 at the Estill County Fairgrounds. Hundreds of people gathered together and marched across the Irvine Bridge. The Estill County High School Marching Engineers led the procession from the fairgrounds to the courthouse.

how she started Drug Courts in Kentucky. One two-year participant in the Drug Court program later told the audience that she will struggle with her addiction the rest of her life. She also stated that she turned to drugs after her young daughter died but has now been clean for two years. Another Drug Court participant said that she was mentally and physically abused during her childhood. She was pregnant and 15 when her father died, and she also turned to drugs. "It was the wrong way to go," she stated. She has been clean for nine months and her husband is also in the program with her. "I'm a better mother," she stated. "I'm just a better person."

Supreme Court Justice Mary Noble spoke about



Above: Supreme Court Justice Mary Noble –

The March is sponsored by the Estill County Fiscal Court, Parents against Drug Dealing and WestCare. "We have a passion to see people get healed and helped," Judge Taylor said.

Above: Ashcamp Annual Recovery Walk

Right: Hundreds Marching across the Irvine bridge

Left: Judge Wallace Taylor - Co-Chair of WestCare Kentucky speaking at the "One Day at a Time" Recovery March



# Celebrating Recovery Month in Fabulous Fresno

By Angie Jenkins, MSW – Director, Training Services

WestCare California staff and clients participated in the 4th annual Soberstock festival September 26. Local community businesses, treatment programs and other partners in recovery came together to provide valuable information and resources.

WestCare California deputy administrator, Lynn Pimentel, has served as the community co-chair since Soberstock's inception. Lynn has played an instrumental role in making this event the success that it is.

Soberstock is always a big event in Fresno and this year was no different. Approximately 10,000 people attended this year's festival, and more than 60 different programs and businesses participated in the event. Individuals were treated to a car/bike show, awesome music provided by local bands, great food booths and, most importantly, fellowship.

*Soberstock always promises a great time for all!*

Right: 4th Annual Soberstock festival participants. ▶

## California



## Nevada



## Heather Frost Bids Us Adieu

Submitted by the WestCare Nevada staff

Heather Frost, who joined the WestCare Foundation approximately a year ago, announced her resignation effective September 29, 2009. During this time, she worked on numerous assignments in Administration, the Endowment Campaign and Community Resources Development. She will be joining a new philanthropic company that creates projects and provides services on a national and

international basis. In Heather's honor, staff recently held a pot luck luncheon that had many attendees, food, fun and conversation. It was truly a great gathering and was enjoyed by all.

Many congratulations were given to Heather on her achievement and contributions to WestCare. Her hard work and dedication will be missed.

▶ Picture of Heather Frost

## WestCare Nevada Recovery Day 2009!

By Jennifer Hilton – Director of Adolescent and Men's Treatment Services

I am happy to report that this years Recovery Day picnic was a smash! We counted through raffle tickets and 1st servings on food - over 750! people came out to hang out and celebrate recovery! We rock out to the band Synergy and the DJ styling of Allen Turner all day. We gave away - 10 brand new bikes and one electric toy car! WestCare Residential holds the Tug of War Winner Title for this year, beating Salvation Army and US Vets! Go WestCare!

*All and all it was one our biggest picnics yet!*



Residents, families, employees and clients celebrating Recovery Day 2009 with games, raffles, great food and music!



September 2009

# RECOVERY

CELEBRATING 20 YEARS

JOIN THE VOICES FOR

TOGETHER WE LEARN,

TOGETHER WE HEAL

## WestCare Celebrates Recovery Month!

Last month, WestCare again joined the nation in educating the public on substance abuse as a national health crisis, that addiction is a treatable disease, and that recovery is possible. Recovery Month highlights the benefits of treatment for not only the affected individual, but for their family, friends, workplace, and society as a whole. Educating the public reduces the stigma associated with addiction and treatment. Accurate knowledge of the disease helps people to understand the importance of supporting treatment programs, those who work within the treatment field, and those in need of treatment.

National Director of the Office of Drug Control Policy R. Gil Kerlikowski was Guest Speaker at WestCare's Village South Sept. 22, graduation.



Director spending some time talking with the graduates.

Nursery visit – Picture of the Director speaking with Families in Transition clients and families in the Village Children's Center.



Briefing – From left to right - Steve Zuckerman, SFPC CFO, John Dow, SFPC CEO, Silvia Quintana, DCF.

Director Kerlikowski with September Graduates.



2009 Annual Recovery Walk – Ashcamp, KY – September 16, 2009



Kentucky: Marching around the Court House 7 times during Estill County Recovery March.



Georgia's 1st Annual Race for Recovery



Soberstock is always a big event in Fresno, CA and this year was no different. Approximately 10,000 people attended this year's festival and more than 60 different programs and businesses participated in the event.



Over 750 residents, families, employees and clients celebrating WestCare Nevada's Recovery Day 2009 with games, raffles, great food and music! All and all it was one our biggest picnics yet!



# Arizona



Above: The last 3 finalists, Joey Merrigan, Andrew Hogan and James Whiting.

Right: Joey Merrigan with his share of the money.

## A LiL' Texas Hold-em to Raise Money

By Tracy Stevens – Area Director

WestCare Arizona held its 3rd Annual Texas Hold-em Poker Tournament fundraiser Saturday, August 22 at the AVI Resort and Casino. Numerous businesses and individuals came out to show their support for WestCare Arizona and the services we provide to the local communities and tribal entities.



There were approximately 150 players who participated throughout the day in three separate sessions. The top ten winners for each session all moved to the final round that night. All money raised was split between WestCare and the top ten winners of the final session. WestCare's own regional vice president, Maurice Lee, made it to the final session only to be knocked out by some serious poker players and a string of bad cards.

With many players taking advantage of "re-buys" so they could continue to play and try to make it to the finals, the event raised more than \$8,000 with \$4,195 going to WestCare and \$4,195 split between the top ten winners. The last three finalists called it a game and each received \$909. The AVI staff was terrific and everyone had a great time. We can't wait until next year!

# 5 Questions with Maurice Lee

Born and raised in New York, Maurice Lee joined WestCare in June 2003 when he became the director of Adolescent and Adult Male Services at the Nevada Harris Springs Ranch. In 2006, he responded to a need at WestCare California, where he transferred. Maurice currently serves as the senior vice president of the Western Region consisting of California, Nevada and Arizona; with his home office based in Fresno, California.

Maurice has been married to his wife for 14 years, whom he met while they were both employed at a correctional institution. He is the father to six children, three of which are his biological daughters (ages 7, 11 and 13) and two nieces (twins, age 12) and one nephew, age 15.

**1. What is your most rewarding experience and biggest challenge working for WestCare?**

The management of WestCare California, Arizona, and Nevada has been a formidable challenge during this challenging world financial crisis. The treatment of our client, solvency of our programs, well-being of the staff and their families is an enormous responsibility that provides me with inspiration to face the daily dilemma.

**2. What do you do in your spare time?**

Whenever I have a spare moment to breathe it is utilized in service to God and my family.

**3. What would everyone be surprised to learn about you?**

As a child I was a regular on the *Bozo the Clown Show*. I swore I would take this one to the grave.

**4. Proudest personal or professional accomplishment?**

Returning to college and completing a degree in business after dropping out of school in the 9th grade.

**5. What is your favorite TV show? If you do not watch TV what is your favorite type of music?**

I love Gospel Music. This category of music serves as a much-needed source of spiritual inspiration for me during times of trouble.



## Creepy Halloween Treats!

# Jack Skellington Cupcakes

By Cindy Littlefield

Much as he wanted it to be, Christmas did not turn out to be Jack Skellington's forte. Still, with a bow tie that resembles a bat and a pet dog whose nose looks like a glowing Jack-o'-lantern, Jack remains king of Halloween. After all, who else do you know that can remove his own head and put it back on again none the worse for wear? Inspired by this remarkable trick, these cupcakes make a sweet, if nightmarish, Halloween treat.



### You'll need:

- Batch of chocolate cupcakes
- White buttercream frosting
- 2 toothpicks
- Tube of black decorator's icing

### Instructions:

1. Frost the cupcakes.
2. For each cupcake, use the tip of a toothpick to lightly etch the outline of two large Jack Skellington eyes in the frosting.
3. Slowly pipe black decorator's icing onto the etched lines and then fill in the inner circles. Use another toothpick to spread and smooth the icing.
4. Pipe on two short lines for a nose. Next, pipe a long line across the bottom of the cupcake for the mouth. For the finishing spooky touch, randomly top the mouth with a bunch of short icing barbs.

## Red Ribbon Week



October 15-17, 2009

## Red Ribbon Anti-Drug Campaign

Red Ribbon Week is the nation's oldest and largest drug prevention program in the nation reaching millions of Americans during the last week of October every year. By wearing red ribbons and participating in community anti-drug events, young people pledge to live a drug-free life and pay tribute to DEA Special Agent Enrique "Kiki" Camarena, of all those in recovery. One resident alone walked a total of 35 miles.

Special Agent Camarena was an 11-year veteran of the DEA assigned to the Guadalajara, Mexico, office where he was on the trail of the country's biggest marijuana and cocaine traffickers. In 1985, he was extremely close to unlocking a multi-billion dollar drug pipeline.

On February 7, 1985, he was kidnapped, brutally tortured, and murdered by Mexican drug traffickers. His tragic death opened the eyes of many Americans to the dangers of drugs and the international scope of the drug trade.



Special Agent Kiki Camarena

### How to Celebrate Red Ribbon Week:

Schools, businesses, the faith community, media, families, and community coalitions join together to celebrate Red Ribbon Week in many ways, such as: sponsoring essay and poster contests; organizing drug-free races; decorating buildings in red; handing out red ribbons to customers; holding parades or community events; and by publicizing the value of a drug-free, healthy lifestyle.



# WestCare Wellness Watch

## A Healthy Staff Equals Healthy Programs

*Submitted by the Health and Wellness Committee, WestCare CA.*



### *The California Health and Wellness Committee knows how to throw a party!*

On August 29th, the committee sponsored a Health and Wellness Fair at Fresno's Woodward Park. Staff was encouraged to participate and bring their family members for an afternoon filled with fun, food and healthy activities. The Health and Wellness Committee grilled chicken and served staff lunch. Staff was also treated to raffle prizes and local businesses came out to share healthy ideas and resources.

This event also provided an excellent opportunity to enjoy time with co-workers and family members in a friendly, welcoming and healthy environment.

*Kudos to the Health and Wellness Committee on a job well done!*



### *In Memory*

WestCare Sheridan mourns the loss of Francis (Frank) Peter Wilk, Jr. Frank was a counselor at Sheridan for almost four years. He passed away September 10, 2009 after a serious illness. Several staff members attended his memorial service on September 20, 2009. Frank was 55 years old and is survived by a son and a daughter.

### Recovery in Bakersfield

By Rashid Frye – Program Director

The Bakersfield programs continue to be involved in our community, by providing services, picking up trash with the mayor, handing out toiletries to military veterans, running for recovery and sharing a word of inspiration and hope at a local Christian car show.

All of these activities were done during the last two weeks of September!

Our battle cry is: This disease doesn't stop and neither will we.

### California

