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WestCare Georgia: The Woman's Place

The Woman's Place (TWP) has an annual goal of providing outpatient treatment services for mental health and substance use disorders to 60 women and outreach services, HIV testing, and education and prevention services to 90 women. Early in the year, meeting our goal seemed daunting, as we had to continue to provide excellent services after losing key personnel.

After assembling a new team we had to get creative and figure out how to best reach women who need access to the services we offer. Capitalizing on the popularity of the Pink Trap House made famous by Atlanta native Rapper 2 Chainz, for National HIV/AIDS testing week, TWP team developed a series of classes for young women called TRAP (*Therapeutic Resources Assessment Planners*).



The Woman's Place team left to right: HIV Women's Specialist, Kesheena Washington; Program Manager, Artisetta M. Garvin; Registered Nurse, Jaketa Singleton; Counselor, Marla Grimes; Research Assistant, Yuniko Tonge. (Not pictured: Area Director, Jeannie Lewis; Counselor, Shannett McGee.)

TRAP classes teach women about safe sex practices and support them in finding resources to build a happy and healthy life. During National Testing Week our team made more than 65 outreach contacts, offering free HIV and Hepatitis-C testing and passing out condom packages and



GEORGIA: *The Women's Place (Con't.)*

information about our services.

With teamwork, diligence, and dedication, our goal doesn't

seem as daunting, because with three quarters of our year behind us, we are at 97% of goal for program participants.



GEORGIA: *Atlanta Honors WestCare's Michael Langford*



On July 17 the Atlanta City Council and Mayor Kasim Reed honored Regional Vice President, WestCare Georgia, Michael Langford with the highest civilian award, The Phoenix Award, and declared the day "Michael Langford Day" in the entire City of Atlanta. Langford was recognized for his more than three decades of advocacy and community involvement.

Particularly noted was Langford's involvement in organizing the effort to search for Atlanta's missing and murdered children during the late 1970's and early 1980's. Organized by Michael and his late brother Senator Arthur Langford, Jr., this effort gained national attention with over 3,000 volunteers going out to canvass neighborhoods every weekend.

Langford was also recognized for his service as the Director of Constituent Services under former Atlanta Mayor Bill Campbell. Langford led a highly successful effort to combat crime through "Operation Take Back," a series of initiatives that included providing recreational activities and summer jobs for at-risk youth.

Flanked by his mother, sons, and dozens of community leaders and well-wishers, a humbled Langford spoke about his life's philosophy, "I have been very blessed with good friends, a loving family, and a community that gave me a chance. My brother use to tell me, whom much is given, much is required and expected. All I ever wanted to do, was my part. I'm honored to accept these awards."





WISCONSIN: *Summer Youth Programs*

Through a partnership with the Employ Milwaukee and the City of Milwaukee, WestCare Wisconsin facilitates *Earn and Learn*, a summer youth employment program. Combined with our *Youth Action Council*, WestCare Wisconsin is keeping our youth very busy this summer.



Earn and Learn youth preparing for community outreach in Milwaukee's Harambee neighborhood.



Earn and Learn youth passing out free gun locks at the Fatherhood Summit in Milwaukee's Granville neighborhood.



Earn and Learn youth enjoy a field trip to the Milwaukee Public Museum to learn about culture and community.



Youth Action Council and Earn and Learn youth participate in Garfield Days Festival and pass out information as part of their Hugs No Drugs drug prevention program.

WISCONSIN: *Reaching New Communities*



Sidewalk Talk event for neighbors and friends in the Woodland Condos Pavilion in the Granville Neighborhood.

As part of its goal to uplift the human spirit, WestCare Wisconsin hosts community outreach events called Sidewalk Talks and Peace Parties to bring youth and their families out of their homes to get active, play games, and enjoy free food and music.



Introduction Peace Party for our new neighbors and friends in the Bradley Courts Town Homes in the Granville Neighborhood.



LGBTQ: Count Me Out ~ Counting LGBTQ Americans Matters

By WestCare's LGBTQ Awareness and Advisory Council

The question of how many LGBTQ people are in the United States has been contemplated for decades. Earlier this year, getting a reliable estimate seemed possible.



In March, the Census Bureau considered asking about sexual orientation and gender identity in the 2020 Census. Ultimately, it was reported that “no federal need for the information” was determined and the

questions would not be included. LGBTQ advocates had been urging the bureau to include the questions, noting that an official count of LGBTQ Americans was long overdue.



“If you're not counted, do you count?” asks David Rosynsky, member of WestCare's LGBTQ Awareness and Advisory Council, “Besides the symbolism of being counted, there are critical social and economic reasons to be included.”

Census data influences federal funding, public services, healthcare and law making. Census data also aids advocacy organizations when campaigning for their interests.

Past estimates of LGBTQ people are wide ranging and highly debated. Perhaps the most recognized statistic is that 10% of Americans identify somewhere on the LGBTQ spectrum. First attributed to sexologist Alfred Kinsey in the 1950s, the *National Gay and Lesbian Task Force* promoted the estimate in the 1970s. The figure soon became generally accepted.

A 2011 report by UCLA School of Law's Williams Institute may contain the most recent and comprehensive estimates. The report estimates that approximately 9 million adults in the U.S. (3.5%) identify as gay, lesbian or bisexual, with 0.3% identifying as transgender. When asked about the 10% estimate, Gary Gates, the author of the report, suggested that given changing attitudes and the rise in LGBTQ millennials, the figure “is not completely unrealistic” for the future. A 2015 Gallup poll revealed that Americans guesstimated that 23% of the U.S. population was gay or lesbian.

For more information about LGBTQ issues, connect with WestCare's LGBTQ Awareness and Advisory Council at lgbtqcouncil@westcare.com.



CALIFORNIA: *MLK Residential Blood Drive*

WestCare California Health & Wellness Committee hosted another blood drive at the MLK Residential facility and saw great support, with 13 successful draws from staff. All donations supported the Central California Blood Center. Thank you to all participants!



CALIFORNIA: *Talent Show*



Staff and the wonderful men, women and children we serve at the MLK Residential facility held a talent show. The event featured singing, dancing, poetry, stand-up comedy, personal testimonies, and more. Thank you to everyone that helped make this such an entertaining and uplifting event! (Pictured: MLK Residential Staff)



CALIFORNIA: *NAEH in Washington D.C.*



As part of our efforts to help end homelessness in Fresno and Madera Counties, WestCare California staff attended the *National Alliance to End Homelessness (NAEH)* Conference in Washington D.C. on behalf of our housing and Veterans programs and the *Fresno Madera Continuum of Care (FMCoC)*. The conference featured guest speakers and over 50 different workshops covering a multitude of topics. We are grateful to have been a part of this amazing conference and look forward to implementing what we've learned.





CALIFORNIA: *Success Story*

A *Veterans Safeway to Work Program (VSWP)* Update from Jose M.: Our *VSWP*, offered at our Veterans Plaza Grant Per Diem transitional living facility for male Veterans, provides vocational assistance to Veterans in need of supplies or training for their desired profession. Following is a letter to our wonderful staff written by a Veteran that we serve.



Denis and Curtis,

First, let me thank you both for giving me hope again. It's because of both of you that I am working again and have my Class A driver's license. Do not let anybody tell you that the program does not work because it worked for me. I use to be strung out on crystal meth, but thanks to God for allowing me to meet you both, I have gotten over that and I am praying that that lifestyle is behind me.

As you both know, I am out and about seeing the world and making good money doing it. You both pushed me to get things done as far as my resume, connecting me to Workforce Connection, mock interviewing me and preparing me to become employment ready. The *Veterans Safeway to Work Program (VSWP)* did wonders for me! At times, when I did not want to go to school or look for employment, the program and you gentlemen challenged me. Although I am gone, it feels like I never left. I am not just a number to you gentlemen, but you treat me as

if I am still a Veteran at the Veterans Plaza. I am able to call and talk to you both about my ex-wife and family issues. You both keep my head on straight and focused. The *VSWP* program really does work for us Veterans that do not have a job. Your program assisted my fellow Veterans that came before me and myself by getting us placed in jobs! I am back working and I love driving trucks! I thank you both.

Jose M.





CALIFORNIA: *WestCare California Staff Recognition*

The Adult Outpatient and Admissions team celebrated Contract Compliance Assistant, Administration, **Michelle Allen's** promotion to her new position in Contract Compliance. While she will be missed, her colleagues are proud of Michelle and wish her the best in her new role.



Sandra Evans, Mary Greene, and Jennifer Childers, at MLK Residential were recognized for working together as a team when a crisis arose in the women's unit. They were calm, held their composure, and assisted the person in need until the paramedics arrived.

Adolescent Counselor, Admissions/Outpatient, **Ryan Moench** was "Caught Being Good" on a particularly chaotic day, when he stepped up and assisted a colleague during some very challenging moments. His team appreciates his initiative and teamwork.



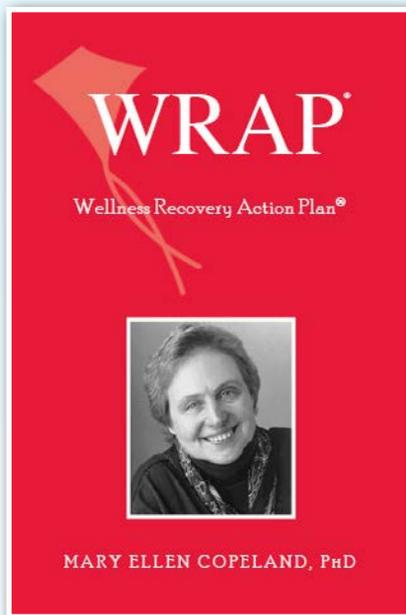
Yadi Renteria, Rovertto Valdez, and Sara Guerrero-Martinez with SJVV (Fresno) were "caught" helping a Veteran whose house burned down. They stayed with him and made sure he was taken care of and had somewhere to sleep and gave him comfort in this time of distress. Way to go, team!

ILLINOIS: *New Tools for Our Toolbox ~ WRAP Training*

By Loretta Berry, Clinical Manager, Sheridan Correctional Center—WestCare Illinois

On Wednesday, July 12 the staff at Sheridan participated in the first *Wellness Recovery Action Plan (WRAP)* training. A prevention and wellness process, *WRAP* was developed by Mary Ellen Copeland and further enhanced in 1997 to help people overcome mental health issues and live fulfilling lives.

- **Education:** When a person understands their mental health disorder they can make better decisions.
- **Self-Advocacy:** Reaching out to others is crucial to maintaining wellness and recovery.
- **Support:** Giving and receiving support enhances quality of life.



WRAP is based on five key recovery concepts:

- **Hope:** People who experience mental health difficulties can get well, stay well, and go on to live life to its fullest.
- **Personal Responsibility:** It is up to each person, with help, to take action and do what needs to be done to stay healthy.



Director of Recovery Support Services for the Illinois DHS/Division of Mental Health, Nanette Larson, BA, CRSS, a nationally recognized leader in the mental health recovery movement, facilitated the training.

Sheridan staff was inspired by her message of hope and wellness and have been overheard saying, “I am working on my action plan,” in the days following the training. Staff is eagerly anticipating taking the second level of *WRAP* training.

ILLINOIS: *Playing for Peace*



WestCare Illinois before playing their first opponent, the "Justice League".

WestCare Illinois staff, people we serve, and volunteers gathered on July 14 and 15 to compete in the first annual *Playing for Peace* softball tournament! The team was coached by WestCare Illinois's own Sixto Garcia, who led practices in the weeks leading up to the event. Players came together with a wide-range of softball experience, allowing both youth and adults to learn new skills from one another.

On game day, the team was ready to show off their hitting and fielding abilities to the many WestCare staff members and families came to cheer them on. To kick off the weekend, Regional Vice President, Stacy Munroe threw out the ceremonial first pitch of the tournament and it was time to play ball!

Director of *Playing for Peace*, Francisco Arenas started the tournament two years ago as a way of connecting organizations around the Chicago area that serve justice

involved youth. Each organization is represented by a team that combines the strengths of youth and staff members. The tournament teaches participants about the structure, skills, and fun of sixteen inch softball. After games, players and spectators assembled for a community-building cook out in the ballpark.

WestCare Illinois is looking forward to participating in the *Playing for Peace* tournament for years to come. Special thanks to Sixto Garcia, James Peek, Marty McGlone, and Bailey Wendt for leading practices, working with the kids, and representing WestCare in the tournament!

KENTUCKY: *Legislators and Leaders Visit WestCare*



Kentucky has been one of the hardest hit states in the opioid epidemic, ranking 3rd in overdose deaths with over 1300 confirmed fatalities in 2016. Alarmingly, this is a 21% increase from the previous year, which had seen a decline and falsely led many to believe that the problem was abating.

This drastic rise in the death rate has pushed legislators and local leaders to look for real answers about what can be done. On June 27, State Legislators Chris Harris, Angie Hatton; Majority Leader, Johnathan Shell; Deputy General Counsel and Healthcare Policy Advisory for House Majority Caucus Anne-Tyler Morgan, toured WestCare's Hal Rogers Appalachian Recovery Center to gain a better understanding of the obstacles that both individuals with substance use disorders and behavioral health care organizations face.

The visitors spent the morning learning about the treatment process and the service gaps in aftercare for

rural communities, as well as the initial factors that contributed to substance misuse. The team talked with both the people we serve and with WestCare staff, which helped to create a better understanding of the larger picture.



PUERTO RICO: *Highlights*



As part of *Guara Bi's* efforts to collaborate with the government, staff met with Director of Third Sector and Base of Faith Division from the Governor's Office, Attorney Hector Albertorio.



Guara Bi extends a special thanks to Ricardo Gali, a Counselor from Argentina, who visited and worked with us in all our facilities. We are grateful for an excellent exchange of experiences and ideas that will continue to strengthen our ties.

For the 5th consecutive year, *Guara Bi* celebrates its Summer Goofy Games. Staff and the people we serve enjoy a healthy, active day that fosters teamwork and solidarity, and everyone learns that what is important is not winning but sharing and having fun.



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DOMINICAN REPUBLIC: *Visiting the Museum of the Dominican Man*



People participating in the *Guara Bi RD* program enjoyed a visit to the Museum of the Dominican Man at the beautiful Plaza de la Cultura.

Everyone had a chance to learn about their history and heritage from exhibits on Tamno natives, who inhabited the island before the arrival of the Spanish.

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How Anyone Can Support WestCare Online

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



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



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

