



HIGHLIGHTS

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Director's Report

by **Connie Beck**

► This past year has been a busy one, and it's hard to believe that we are already into 2024. Here are some of the highlights from the past year.



Public Health

In November, the Live Well Humboldt (LWH) Community Health Dashboard, championed by Public Health staff, was launched. Made up of staff from county departments and divisions, local medical providers, Tribal partners, cities, Cal Poly Humboldt and other government agencies, LWH participants are working together to improve health equity in the county. The free dashboard can be used to learn more about community health data and other health resources, like funding opportunities, promising practices and reports. View

the website here: livewellhumboldt.org.

In July, the Humboldt County Board of Supervisors enacted a Tobacco Retail Licensing Ordinance for unincorporated Humboldt County. Public Health's Healthy Communities and Environmental Health staff spent many hours working on this ordinance that's purpose is to reduce the availability of tobacco for youth in the community and help enforce local, state and federal tobacco laws. The ordinance prohibits tobacco retailers from selling tobacco products in unincorporated Humboldt County without first obtaining a valid tobacco retailer's license. Staff will continue to be involved with education, implementation and oversight.

Social Services

During the pandemic, states received additional funding making it possible to provide continuous coverage to Medi-Cal recipients without the need for them to submit renew-

als. That requirement ended March 31, and the normal renewal process resumed. Social Services staff have been diligently working through the Medi-Cal unwinding process since then, reaching out to as many people as possible to make sure they are turning in their renewals, so they don't have a lapse in coverage.

Housing

The West Village Studios in the Valley West area of Arcata were completed, adding 78 units and bringing the number to 335 new units that DHHS has helped create in the past nine years.

Child Welfare Services

Staff licensed 32 new homes as Resource Family-approved homes where foster children can be placed, provided independent living skills services to 85 local youth and provided extended foster care services to 74 young adults as they transition into adulthood. Staff also worked tirelessly

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Tsunami Awareness Week provides time to prepare

by **Terrence**

McNally, DHHS Emergency Preparedness Program Coordinator



► The DHHS footprint in Eureka is an excellent place to do business since it's a centrally located area serving the largest percentage of Humboldt County residents. Obviously, it's a coastal community and the downside is that several departmental buildings lie within the Tsunami Inundation Zone.

The bayside facilities at the Koster Complex, Plaza, WIC, Second and D, as well as the Division of Environmental Health, all have exposure to a potential tsunami resulting from earthquakes. Dangers to workers will not be an issue during a distant source tsunami – one occurring in, say, Japan or Alaska –since oncoming waves will be several hours away before making landfall. But it's the potential for a near-source tsunami resulting from a nearby offshore



earthquake that remains a concern.

The department has been prepping well for potential fires with regular drills. However, a common question asked during these drills from staff working in those low-lying buildings is,

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to complete more than 200 investigations in an agencywide backlog reduction plan.

Behavioral Health

Demolition of the Adult Crisis Residential Treatment facility was completed, and construction started for the project, which is expected to open in April.

We have partnered with Sorrel Leaf for a Children's Crisis Residential Treatment Facility while the facility is not open yet, they are partnering with Children's Behavioral Health to provide mobile response to emergency

departments for children in crisis.

Behavioral Health staff also collaborated with the City of Eureka and its CARE team on a series of Community Health Town Hall meetings that focused on mental health, substance use disorder, raising resilient children and homelessness.

Additionally, staff launched a new webpage to make it easier for community members and community partners to locate Behavioral Health resources. View the webpage here: Humboldtgov.org/BHResources.

After losing staff during COVID, in the past year, DHHS has garnered a net

gain of 32 employees which is moving us toward regaining the ground we lost. We were also able to gain approval from the Board of Supervisors to implement recruitment and retention bonuses for eligibility staff to address significant staffing issues, and due to appropriate staffing levels of Public Health Nurses, we are finally able to close our continuous recruitment for that position that has been running since 2017.

Not even two months in, and 2024 is already proving to be busy, and I look forward to continuing to share with you all throughout the year. ◀

2024 Point-In-Time Count

▶ Volunteers gathered at locations throughout the county early on the morning of Jan. 23, to participate in the Point-in-Time (PIT) count.

The PIT count takes place in communities across the U.S. on a single night during the last 10 days of January, as required by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. Numbers from the count are used by the state of California to allocate funding to counties to address homelessness and housing.

Conducted by the Humboldt Housing & Homelessness Coalition (HHHC), the count documents the number of sheltered and unsheltered homeless people in the community.

For more information about the HHHC, visit humboldtgov.org/hhhc. ◀



From left, DHHS Public Health Nurse Andrea Armin, Transition-Age Youth (TAY) Peer Coach III Jessica Coats and TAY Youth David Eichenbaum, Robin Kubik, Dorothy Scott and Candice Cook prepare go-bags to hand out during the 2024 PIT count.



From left, community member Michael Crowley receives PIT count instructions from UPLIFT Eureka Outreach Worker Robert Williams.



A map depicting Eureka's 35th Zone for the 2024 PIT count.

Tsunami, continued from page 1

“What do we do during a tsunami?” In March, DHHS will undertake its largest tsunami response drills with multiple exercises at those locations. The drills are timed during Tsunami Preparedness Week, March 23 through 31, which is a statewide effort to educate the public about potential exposure and response.

An understandable response when a tsunami looms is to jump in your car and head to higher ground. But that’s likely going to be a bad tactic. We can expect that our roads will be maxed out by members of the community also attempting to drive away. Nothing could be worse than trying to escape and being immediately struck in traffic.

For that reason, we’ll be practicing walking drills during Tsunami Preparedness Week. For instance, staff at the Koster Complex will be lead

on several marches up to the Jefferson Community Center which is well outside the tsunami inundation zone. At the Plaza, workers will all exit and walk up the grade at the building’s south side toward the Open Door Community Health Center entrance, which is also a safe area.

In January, AFSCME Local 1684 got a heads up during its general membership meeting about the drills and agreed that the exercises will be an excellent way to keep staff safe. Please note: participation will be voluntary, but staff is strongly encouraged to make the walk in order to lessen difficulties during an actual tsunami warning.

DHHS is poised to take a leadership role in the community and in coming weeks we’ll be issuing information to our neighbors about the department’s efforts and how the

public can be informed and plan accordingly. We can all get better at this, so we’ll be reminding our Humboldt community that they too can think about where they live or work in relation to a Tsunami Inundation Zone.

Do you have questions about your home, a child’s school or recreational areas and how they could be impacted? The Redwood Coast Tsunami Work Group has posted updated Tsunami Hazard Maps which were recently completed by the California Geological Survey. Check them out at rctwg.humboldt.edu/tsunami-hazard-maps. But stay aware as you travel throughout the county.

Tsunami zones are publicized with blue signage at the zone borders.

Thanks for doing your part to keep yourself safe as well as neighbors, friends and family. ◀

Behavioral Health Director’s Report

by Emi Botzler-Rodgers, LMFT

▶ I was reading through a report from staff in one of my programs and the sentence, “There is unprecedented access to BH services, and we anticipate an increase in referrals,” caught my attention. I know this statement is true, that we are seeing more and more need and request for (BH) Behavioral Health services, and it only seems to be increasing.

This is in addition to the substantial number of initiatives rolling out for Behavioral Health, including Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) Reform and Prop 1 going to the voters in



March; SB 43, Care Court, 988 and the Mobile Crisis Benefit; AB 2083, FSP Levels of Care, and Community Care Expansion; AOT, Diversion, First Episode Psychosis; CalAIM Payment Reform, Documentation Reform, Eligibility Criteria and No Wrong Door, among many others.

In addition to these things, locally we are working on projects to strengthen our continuum of care including partnering with Sorrel Leaf for a Children’s Crisis Residential Treatment Facility, with Willow Glen for an Adult Crisis Residential Treatment Facility and with Mad River Community Hospital on a Behavioral Health Crisis Triage Center.

It can feel daunting. I do feel fortunate because I have staff who work incredibly hard to develop, implement and manage these efforts and requirements. There are staff who are

expert in many of these areas already, or who are well-equipped to quickly get apprised of the details and steps to accomplish these multitude of tasks.

We also have partners in the community and other providers, willing to come together to do this work. And then there are the individuals on the ground, engaging with those in our community who are suffering, and often our most vulnerable, due to mental health and/or substance use challenges. There is a place, a need and an appreciation for all these individuals doing this never-ending, often thankless work, to support healing and recovery in our community.

Some days the tasks seem too much, the workload too heavy, the finish line too far away, but then I remember those I am doing this work with and for, and I feel grateful. ◀



Help Wanted

▶ DHHS is currently recruiting qualified applicants for a variety of positions. For a list of job opportunities, visit humboldt.gov/org/jobs and click Job Opportunities, or contact Employee Services at 707-441-5510. ◀



CWS Report

New Local Center-Based Complex Care for Foster Youth Available

by Alison Phongsavath, CWS Program Manager II



► Since 2017, foster youth who require a level of care higher than what is available locally have been required to leave Humboldt County in hopes to receive the treatment and support they need. As of Feb. 1, 2024, this will no longer be the case.

Short-Term Residential Therapeutic Programs (STRTPs) came out of California's Continuum of Care Reform. They were implemented so that when foster youth need to be placed in what was previously known as a Group Home or Congregate Care, they are able to readily access behavioral health services/treatment to help the youth reintegrate back into

their community in home-based care.

The California Department of Social Services defines Complex Care as, "intended to highlight circumstances in which youth have a variety of identified needs across multiple domains that have been unmet, often over long periods of time by behavioral health, child welfare, probation, education and other systems." They encouraged counties to work with providers to develop Innovative Models of Care (IMC) to address the complex needs of specific youth and/or populations and Humboldt County did just that.

Redwood Community Services has been providing youth residential services since 2006 and has offices in Lake, Mendocino and Humboldt counties. We collaborated with Redwood Community Services by providing a startup contract to create an IMC STRTP in the greater Eureka area.

Despite being treatment-focused, this new facility will provide a home-like setting. It is licensed for up to two beds. This allows for greater support for youth who require more complex treatment needs. Child Welfare Ser-

vices and Probation foster youth ages 7 to 17 years old, who have a variety of identified needs across multiple domains that have not been successfully met, are eligible for placement treatment services through the new facility. The acuity of these symptoms and/or behaviors these youth experience have prevented them from being able to access Intensive Services Foster Care programs or traditional STRTP milieu settings. The goal of this Center-Based Complex Care STRTP is to provide stabilization, effective treatment and step-down transition planning so youth can transition into lower levels of care within three to five months.

We're excited to have this local option for treatment for young people in need. This new service promotes youth remaining in their communities so they can continue with their school of origin, have more frequent visits with friends and family and for many of our local indigenous young people, proximity and access to cultural supports and connections. ◀



Equity Update

by Neftali Miller-Rubio, Racial & Cultural Equity Manager

► Hello and Happy New Year! The change in calendar provides the perfect opportunity to reflect on accomplishments and to set goals for the future. The Equity Update this quarter focuses on just that – the ground we've covered and how we plan to make the most out of the final two years of our current Racial Equity Strategic Plan.

Since the start of the Steering Committee in 2020, DHHS has launched three departmentwide mandatory trainings. Two of these, "Exploring Racial Equity: Common Terms" and "Implicit Bias: An Introduction," have reached 97 percent and 91 percent of staff respectively. As of January, our

live-facilitated course, "Foundations of Racial Equity," has reached 32 percent of staff and consistently reached enrollment capacity. The current schedule will accommodate 100 percent of staff by September. Interested staff can still reserve their spot.

The Racial Equity Strategic Plan was rolled out in the summer of 2022 in a series of supervisor-led conversations across the department. Questions and feedback have provided a guidepost this year as we've developed new resources, crafted curriculum, completed an FAQ and glossary of terms and begun crafting the Plan's update.

New last year, were optional race-based affinity sessions in our Foundations trainings. Exploring race and racism in predominantly white settings can place a disproportionate burden on people of color to teach and explain concepts to their white peers. The intention of the affinity sessions is to create space for staff of color to explore topics alongside

people who share identities and experiences similar to their own, centering the needs and comfort of people of color. We continue to offer general sessions for all staff, regardless of racial identities.

Data from multiple sources confirm this work is meaningful, has impact and that staff and leaders want more. Sixty percent indicate that equity trainings have impacted how they approach their job or interactions with clients, co-workers and/or the community. Over 90 percent of supervisory-level staff who have taken the Foundations training rate usefulness of material and effectiveness of facilitation at 4 out of 5 or higher, with 5 being "extremely useful/effective." Over 90 percent of staff report being familiar or very familiar with core terms, and the top three areas staff want more time with are the Four Dimensions of Racism, local indigenous communities and microaggressions. More data will be available

Equity, continued from page 4

in the Racial Equity Annual Report, expected in late February.

DHHS continues to create necessary space for all staff to expand their understanding of concepts related to bias and racism. With limited capacity, aligning efforts across DHHS is essential. This remains a focus as we craft strategies to lead us through 2025 and

beyond, emphasizing Goal 2: Training and Coaching for All Staff and Goal 6: Improving Experiences of BIPOC Staff.

Office hours continue via Zoom for supervisors, managers, deputies and directors with questions, coaching or resource needs.

Office hours continue for supervisor-level staff who would like coaching

or resources, reach out if you need the Zoom link. Sessions happen the first and third Wednesdays of the month from 10 to 11 a.m. and the second and fourth Wednesdays from 3 to 4 p.m.

All staff are welcome to contact the Racial & Cultural Equity Manager and Steering Committee via email here: DHHSRacialEquity@co.humboldt.ca.us. ◀

Social Services Report

by **Ryan Bishop**, Deputy Branch Director

▶ The Medi-Cal program in California has long stood as a beacon of hope for millions of low-income individuals and families, providing essential health care coverage. Recently, the state has taken significant strides to expand access and improve the program, particularly through the inclusion of non-citizens aged 26 to 49 and the implementation of asset elimination rules. These changes mark a pivotal moment in the state's commitment to health care equity and inclusion.



The expansion of Medi-Cal to cover non-citizens between the ages of 26 and 49 is a momentous step toward ensuring that more Californians have access to vital health care services. This demographic often falls within the workforce, contributing to the state's economy, yet many struggle to afford health insurance. As

of Jan. 1, 784 non-citizens in Humboldt County were approved for full scope Medi-Cal services. This expansion not only showcases the state's commitment to the welfare of all residents but also tackles the urgent demand for accessible health care among a vital part of the population in our community.

Moreover, the new asset elimination rules, which came into effect on Jan. 1, offer significant potential for our local community. The Governor's office anticipates 707,000 individuals statewide who were previously excluded will now be eligible for Medi-Cal. Previously, strict asset limits posed obstacles for individuals seeking health care through Medi-Cal, often preventing those with low incomes from accessing the program. By removing these limits, the state has opened the door to better health care access in underserved rural areas, where residents have limited incomes but still need essential medical care.

The impact of these changes extends beyond health care alone. By bolstering access to Medi-Cal, the state

strengthens its communities, fostering healthier, more resilient populations. Improved health care access can lead to better overall well-being, increased productivity and reduced financial strain on families, ultimately contributing to a more robust and equitable society.

In essence, the expansion of Medi-Cal to include non-citizens ages 26 to 49 and the implementation of asset elimination rules represent critical milestones in California's journey toward health care equity. These measures not only reflect a commitment to inclusivity and social welfare but also hold the potential to uplift communities, particularly those in rural areas, by ensuring that essential health care services are within reach for all who call California home.

If you or someone you know is interested in applying for Medi-Cal, please refer them to BenefitsCal.com, our local Call Center at 1-877-410-8809 or any one of our six office locations in Eureka, McKinleyville, Fortuna, Garberville, Hoopa or Redway. ◀

Tobacco-Retail License application assistance available

by **Katie Jo Slaughter** Senior Health Education Specialist, **Caitlin Giddings** Health Education Specialist II and **Courtney Angelo** Health Education Specialist I

▶ In mid-July, the Humboldt County Board of Supervisors unanimously adopted a Tobacco Retail Licensing (TRL) ordinance! All commercial tobacco retailers in unincorporated Humboldt County are under the juris-

diction of the TRL ordinance. The TRL provides a way to enforce the statewide ban on selling flavored tobacco products and rules about selling tobacco products to underage youth.

Public Health staff from the Tobacco Free Humboldt (TFH) program of the Healthy Communities Division and the Division of Environmental Health (DEH) are partnering on education, outreach, implementation and enforcement of the TRL. This is a huge step forward to better the health and well-being of our community.

A January 2022 survey done by
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members of the Tobacco Education Network (TEN) at 37 tobacco retailers in unincorporated areas of the county resulted in an underage purchase rate of 54 percent. With the underage purchase rates so high in unincorporated Humboldt, we are excited to move forward and help educate retailers about steps they can take to prevent these sales. The first phase of the tobacco retailer education plan included phone calls and visits to every unincorporated Humboldt as the TRL ordinance is implemented. ◀

Children's Dental Health Month

► At its Feb. 6 meeting, the Humboldt County Board of Supervisors declared February as National Children's Dental Health Month.

DHHS's Oral Health Program Coordinator Sarah Vogel was present to accept the proclamation and speak to its importance. "This proclamation highlights the importance of oral health and negative impact that poor dental health has on our children. It is a reminder to caregivers that children can be cavity free if daily dental habits are established early in life and reinforced by portraying brushing, flossing and dental visits as positive experiences," she said.

Dental resources and tips for caregivers can be found by visiting the Humboldt County Dental Advisory Group's website at smilehumboldt.com. ◀



From left, Oral Health Program Coordinator Sarah Vogel and First District Supervisor Rex Bohn.

**YOUR OFFICE, CLUB OR ORGANIZATION
CAN HELP HUMBOLDT FAMILIES GET TOOLS
FOR A HEALTHY SMILE!**



Humboldt County's Dental Advisory Group (DAG) - Smile Humboldt is coordinating workplace supply drives to collect dental hygiene products for children, teens, and adults who have limited access to supplies. We hope your organization will join us in this important effort!

Donated toothbrushes, floss/flossers, and toothpaste will be received by Redwood Community Action's TOOTH Program to support local schools, Family and Community Resource Centers and other local organizations providing services to families who have limited access to supplies.

2024 Smile Drive drop-off locations

- **Blue Lake Family Resource Center**
111 Greenwood Ave., Blue Lake
707-668-4281
- **Bridgeville Community Center**
38717 Kneeland Road, Bridgeville
707-777-1775
- **Eureka Grocery Outlet**
625 Commercial St., Eureka
- **Fortuna Family Resource Center**
2089 Newburg Road, Fortuna
707-834-3646

- **Hupa Family Resource Center**
8 Holt St., Hoopa
530-625-4000
- **Manila Community Resource Center**
1611 Peninsula Drive, Manila
707-444-9771
- **Marshall Family Resource Center**
2100 J St. (FRC Portable Building),
Eureka
707-441-2404
- **Mattole Valley Resource Center**
167 Sherman St., Petrolia
707-629-3348
- **Pine Hill/South Bay FRC**
5230 Vance Ave., Eureka
707-445-5933
- **RCAA**
904 G St., Eureka
707-269-2001
- **Rio Dell Community Resource Center**
406 Wildwood Ave., Rio Dell
707-764-5239
- **Southern Humboldt Family Resource Center**
344 Humboldt Ave., Redway
707-923-1147
- **Willow Creek Community Resource Center**
38883 Highway 299, Willow Creek
530-629-3141

To learn more, visit
[smilehumboldt.com/
2024-smile-drive](http://smilehumboldt.com/2024-smile-drive).

Human Trafficking Awareness Month

► If you or someone you know has experienced human trafficking, help is available. The National Human Trafficking Hotline provides free, confidential help, 24/7. Visit [humantraffickinghotline.org](https://www.humantraffickinghotline.org) to learn more. ◀



Child Welfare Services staff gathered to observe and show their support for National Human Trafficking Awareness Month in January.

Red Cross shelter training helps prepare staff for disaster response

► Sixteen Social Services staff were provided Red Cross shelter training in late January at the Blue Lake Casino's Sapphire Palace. The exercises gave workers an overview of Red Cross procedures with some hands-on cot building. Adding to a crew that were trained in July, DHHS now has a team of nearly 30 staff members who are able to augment Red Cross resources during a disaster. ◀



Above, Office Services Supervisor Julie Rosser gets familiar with cot building.



Above, Red Cross staff shows the contents of one of its shelter trailers, which are deployed to shelter facilities during a disaster.

DHHS visits the state capitol

► DHHS Assistant Director Michele Stephens, Del Norte County Department of Health and Human Services Director Ranell Brown and Public Health Director Sofia Pereira spent time in Sacramento at the County Health Executives Association of California (CHEAC) State Legislative Education Day. Attendees visited the State Capitol, meeting with district legislators about CHEAC’s priorities and asking for their support for local health jurisdictions. Stephens, who is currently serving as CHEAC’s Vice President, and Pereira are both members of the statewide organization of county and city health department and agency directors, who are responsible for the administration, oversight and delivery of a broad range of local public health and indigent health care services. ◀



From left, Michele Stephens, Ranell Brown and Sofia Pereira.

Long-time employees retire



From left, Substance Use Disorder Services Analyst Michelle Thomas, Medical Office Assistant II Tammie Tully, Behavioral Health Branch Director Emi Botzler-Rodgers, Vesta Wunner, Senior Program Manager Deanna Bay and Behavioral Health Clinician II Ahimsa Tiana.

► In December, the Humboldt County Board of Supervisors celebrated the retirement of Supervising Behavioral Health Clinician Vesta Wunner, after nearly 26 years with DHHS. During her tenure, Vesta held many positions in the Behavioral Health Branch. At the meeting, some of Vesta’s former colleagues were in attendance and shared stories of appreciation for her always being “consistently patient, gentle and kind.” ◀

► In November, the Humboldt County Board of Supervisors celebrated the retirement of Susan Carns, Health Education Specialist II, who worked for the county for 27 years. Several of Susan’s former co-workers showed up in support and shared personal stories that reflected on how meaningful their time working with her was. ◀



From left, Health Education Specialist II Sam Gimon, Public Health Deputy Branch Director Lara Weiss, Susan Carns, Program Coordinator Michael Weiss and Senior Program Manager Briana Sherlock.

Veterans Day Recognized

► Did you notice green lights illuminating the front of The Veterans Memorial Building of Eureka in November? Each Veterans Day, the National Association of Counties and the National Association of County Veterans Service Officers invite counties across the country to join Operation Green Light for Veterans to shine a light on issues veterans face and highlight the resources available to veterans at the county, state and federal levels.

As part of Operation Green Light for Veterans, some county buildings were illuminated with green lighting Nov. 6 through 12.

The county also honored veterans across the country for their service with a Veterans Day proclamation at a November Humboldt County Board of Supervisors meeting. ◀



From left, Fourth District Supervisor Natalie Arroyo and DHHS Veterans Service Officer Rena Maveety.

At least 1 in 10 Americans aged 60 and older have experienced some form of elder abuse.

Elder abuse comes in different forms:

- Neglect
- Physical abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Abandonment
- Emotional or psychological abuse
- Financial abuse
- Self-neglect.



If you are worried that you or someone you know is experiencing elder abuse,

call the Humboldt County Adult Protective Services 24/7 reporting hotline at 707-476-2100.

Elder Abuse Reporting Hotline available 24/7

► Following the Humboldt County Grand Jury's recommendations to its report, "Silver Tsunami Warning: Safeguarding Our Seniors," DHHS launched a marketing campaign to educate community residents about the signs of elder abuse and how to report it.

If you suspect that you or someone you know is the victim of elder abuse, call Humboldt County Adult Protective Services 24/7 reporting hotline at 707-476-2100. ◀

Live Well Humboldt

► At a Board of Supervisors meeting in late November, DHHS Public Health staff gave a presentation about the Live Well Humboldt Community Health Dashboard. The dashboard is a free online resource to access community quality of life data and related resources, like funding opportunities, promising practices and reports.

Live Well Humboldt is a network of community collaborators committed to aligning community efforts across sectors and focus areas to advance health and racial equity and improve health for everyone in Humboldt County. The dashboard will also be used to track progress on the Community Health Improvement Plan and help partners continue to align efforts to improve health outcomes for everyone in Humboldt County.

Visit the dashboard at livewellhumboldt.org. ◀



From left, Program Coordinator Ashley Gephart, Public Health Director Sofia Pereira and Public Health Deputy Branch Director Lara Weiss.

State Legislative Analyst staff visit Humboldt County DHHS

► Staff from California’s Legislative Analyst Office (LAO) stopped by DHHS’s Transition-Age Youth (TAY) Division during a recent multi-day visit. The LAO visitors viewed a staff-led “Connected Crafting” group during TAY’s open hours and were given a tour of the facility. After the tour, the guests sat down to talk with Supervising Behavioral Health Clinician Sonya Levy-Boyd and Social Worker III Calla Peltier-Olson about TAY’s organizational structure, the services offered and the community it serves.

The LAO provides fiscal and policy advice to the state Legislature and is known for its nonpartisan analyses of the state budget. While in town, LAO staff also observed CalWORKs, CalFresh, Helping Humboldt, Eligibility Specialist Training, Adult Protective Services, In-Home Supportive Services and Child Welfare Services in action. The visit was an opportunity for DHHS staff to lift up various program successes and challenges to state policy makers. Many thanks to all the DHHS staff who made this possible. ◀



From left, Supervising Behavioral Health Clinician Sonya Levy-Boyd, California LAO staff and Social Worker III Calla Peltier-Olson.



TAY participate in a beading workshop.

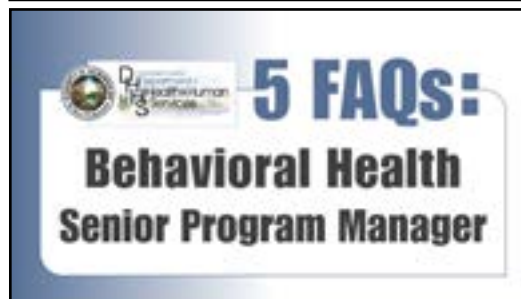


From left, Calla Peltier-Olson, staff from the California LAO and Sonya Levy-Boyd talk about TAY’s organizational structure, the services offered and the community it serves.

Introducing the ‘5 FAQs’ video series!

► Are you interested in DHHS employment or do you know someone who is? DHHS is excited to present “5 FAQs,” a new video series aimed at providing information and insight on open positions throughout the department.

In our first videos, Eligibility Specialist I Brandon Aziz and Behavioral Health Senior Program Manager Jessica Duke answer frequently asked questions among prospective applicants and newly hired employees. Click on the image to watch and learn more about each position. ◀



TAY celebrate end of year

► “The end of the year celebration paired leadership skill building with food and fun! The event brought together young people with lived experience to share in community and bask in the accomplishments that they and Humboldt County Transition-Age Youth Collaboration (HCTAYC) achieved in 2023. With made-from-scratch Falafel, pitas, baklava, and fixings from Calla and Sonya, HCTAYC staff put elbow grease into making sure that the young people felt the end of the year joy!” - Calla Peltier-Olson who serves as HCTAYC’s Lead Youth Organizer. ◀



TAY participant David Eichenbaum takes notes during a chart writing workshop.



TAY participant Leo presents a chart for feedback during a chart writing workshop.



From right, TAY participant Oddy joins in a chart writing workshop.



Those who attended were provided a home cooked falafel and pita meal.

TAY Fall Feast

► The TAY Division held its annual Fall Feast in November bringing participants together for a warm holiday meal and gathering. HCTAYC staff were on-site to help prepare and serve food buffet-style, including turkey, mashed potatoes, green bean casserole and dessert. “Fall Feast was the first in-person feast post-Covid and was well attended. It was a great opportunity for staff and youth to connect and see one another.” – Kim Vatcher-Smith, Vocational Assistant. ◀



Youth participants pose for a photo with Social Workers Rosemary Shultz and Erica Carrillo and Peer Coach II Nyx Austin.



HCTAYC staff serve food to attendees.



HCTAYC staff join the festivities.



TAY enjoy food at the Fall Feast.



From left, Social Worker II Kelsey Reedy and Calla Peltier-Olson serve slices of pie.

Adopted and Foster Youth and Families Celebrate Winter

► In December, nearly 200 foster and adopted youth and their families gathered at the Arcata Community Center to celebrate “Families in a Winter Wonderland.” The annual event coordinated by staff from Child Welfare Services, Humboldt County Transition-Age Youth and Sunrise Rotary of Arcata, was held for the first time since 2019.

Service and resource providers including staff from Humboldt County Office of Education, Redwood Community Services, Environmental Alternatives, Interact Program in Arcata, College of the Redwoods, Evolve Youth Services and Humboldt County Probation also attended.

Highlights from the festive evening included a holiday gift raffle, caroling from Eureka High School’s Limited Edition Choir, a buffet dinner donated and prepared by Sunrise Rotary of Arcata members, face painting, interactive games and of course, a visit from Santa and Mrs. Claus! ◀



Social Worker II Erica Carrillo and an attendee at the face painting station.



Social Worker IV Myrna Corder poses with Santa and Mrs. Claus!



Staff from Evolve Youth Services provide information and resources to guests.



Members of Rotary Club of Arcata Sunrise pose for a group photo.



From left, Rotary of Arcata Sunrise’s Charlie Perez draw raffle tickets with help from Social Worker Supervisor II Trevlene Blood.



Some attendees left with gifts and prizes.



Eureka High School’s Limited Edition Choir.