



Spring

2017, Vol I, Issue 3

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## Mental Health passes preliminary audit



These are just a few of the dozens of staff members who worked for months on the audit. Back row from left: Paul Bugnacki, Glen Guidry, Annie Beckett, Gabe Bennett, Elvira Schwarz and Wanda Hansen. Front row from left: Cassidy McCrane, Michelle Thomas, Scott B. Irvin, Scott A. Harris, Jeff Hitchcock and Whitney Williamson. Center: Dr. Ruby Bayan.

► Employees in Mental Health and across DHHS spent months working on a recent California Department of Health Care Services' audit, and all that work paid off. In preliminary results from the auditors, Mental Health achieved a 100 percent compliance rate in seven categories, along with two 96 percents and one 90.

Audit review areas included:

- Required programs and variety of support programs
- Availability of services to the public
- Authorization
- Our practices that support and protect our clients' safety
- Funding, Reporting and Contracting Requirements
- How our Outpatient Services is working with Primary Care Providers
- Psychiatrists' and clinicians' relations with clients

- Program services are appropriate
- Quality Improvements review of services and corrections
- Mental Health Services Act programs
- Chart Review of Outpatient, Case Management and Alcohol and Other Drug services
- Review and evaluation of 22 separate areas of requirements not included in the above.

In addition to scoring high on the technical aspects, Paul Bugnacki, senior program manager and Mental Health compliance officer, said the auditors were impressed with the way staff worked with patients and partners. "Our auditors repeatedly commented on how evident it was that our employees have a real passion and care about the work they are doing with the people in our communities."

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## Local tribal youth wins leadership award

Tristin Severns will be representing Humboldt County among the state's most ambitious advocates for California youth mental health.

Severns was recently invited to accept his 2017 Creative Advocacy Young Leaders award at San Francisco's SOMArts gallery at its April 29 ceremony. That was news to Severns as



"Tristin," page 3 ►

## CIT training teams mental health services with law enforcement

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# Director's Report by Connie Beck



► Happy spring to all of you. After all the rain this year, I'm sure we're all looking forward to a little sunshine.

First up I'd like to say how very happy I am to announce that Michele Stephens has been named Director of Public Health for DHHS. Michele joined the department in 2006 and has served as a Social Worker, Supervisor, Program Manager II and most recently the deputy director responsible for Child Welfare Services. Her promotion to the prevention side of DHHS will further the agency's integration efforts and provide us with new ways of working upstream to strengthen families and communities. Michele has a BA in Child Development and a Master's in Social Work, both from Humboldt State University. She previously worked at Northcoast Children's Services and as a graduate intern for two years at Open Door. Congratulations, Michele, and a huge thank you to Susan Buckley, Michele's predecessor, for more than 25 years of dedicated service to DHHS.

In more good news, some of you may have seen the post on Facebook about our Social Services employees receiving an award from the state for their speed and efficiency in processing CalFresh applications. This earned them a well-deserved Recognition of

Excellence award at a recent California Welfare Directors Association meeting in Sacramento. Congratulations and thank you to all involved. And if you're not following us on Facebook, do so. Our page is at [facebook.com/humcodhhs](https://www.facebook.com/humcodhhs).

Springtime is also budget time at DHHS, and like the county's other departments we've been preparing the fiscal 2017-18 budget. The vast majority of our funds are entitlement programs and earmarks which don't give us a lot of spending flexibility, but within those limitations our attention this year is very firmly on direct service and reducing administrative costs wherever possible. Our focus is and has to be the on-the-ground work, and I want to thank employees throughout the department, from fiscal to our program folks, first for their hard work on the budget, and second for keeping their focus on the people we serve.

At the beginning of this quarter, our Mental Health team put on a four-day Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) training designed to help police officers and other law enforcement officials respond to situations where mental health issues are a concern. The training included nationally recognized experts who talked about ways of engaging people in mental health crisis to de-es-

calate behaviors and safely resolve encounters with law enforcement. Since CIT trainings began locally in 2007, more than 365 people have completed the training. Thank you Mental Health employees and advocates for your work on this.

Another important project we've been working on is The Center at McKinleyville, a collaborative effort to bring much-needed services and supports to the McKinleyville area. I'm happy to report that the North Coast Regional Department of Child Support Services has recently joined the project as a core partner with the McKinleyville Family Resource Center, Open Door and DHHS. The partners have submitted their design plan updates to the contractor for review. DHHS and Public Works are in the final steps of the design phase and plan to start the lease negotiations and board approval process soon. Next up is the start of the building phase, when we'll actually get to see this thing so many people have worked on for so long.

Is a summer groundbreaking too much to hope? Maybe, but spring is a hopeful season. I'll let you know how that works out. ◀

## Wraparound develops family strengths for at-risk youth

► Many of the county's most at-risk youth are getting improved treatment thanks to an approach called Wraparound, which increases support for children and adolescents dealing with emotional and behavioral health challenges. The progress is made possible through both listening to and advising the people closest to them—their family.

The goal is to allow young people to remain in their homes and communities. Wraparound brings together multiple programs to collaborate on treatment strategies. Children's Mental Health, Child Welfare Services and the Humboldt



Wraparound Unit team members, from left: Tim Johnson, Candice Campbell, Marshall Boyett, Heidi Young, Trevlene Blood, Donna Filippini, Dani Widmark and Corina Keppeler.

he didn't know he'd entered. Instead, several advocates from throughout the state had nominated him for his work. "I was shocked," the 20-year-old said.

The West Coast non-profit Young Minds Advocacy runs the award. Young Minds addresses what it sees as the number one health issue facing young people and their families—unmet mental health needs. "We will be honoring youth and adult leaders who have inspired us with their work and who have made a difference in the lives of youth with mental health needs," Young Minds Advocacy said about the award element.

The organization's goals line up with Severns'. After connecting with the Humboldt County Transition-Age Youth Collaboration (HCTAYC) and joining its Youth Advisory Board (YAB), the Yurok youth started reaching out to his peers struggling with mental health issues.

Severns has been leading trainings and talks regularly and helps with HCTAYC Wellness Week coordination. He also participated in lobbying state representatives on Assembly Bill 1067. Now passed, the bill specifies protections from psychiatric medication

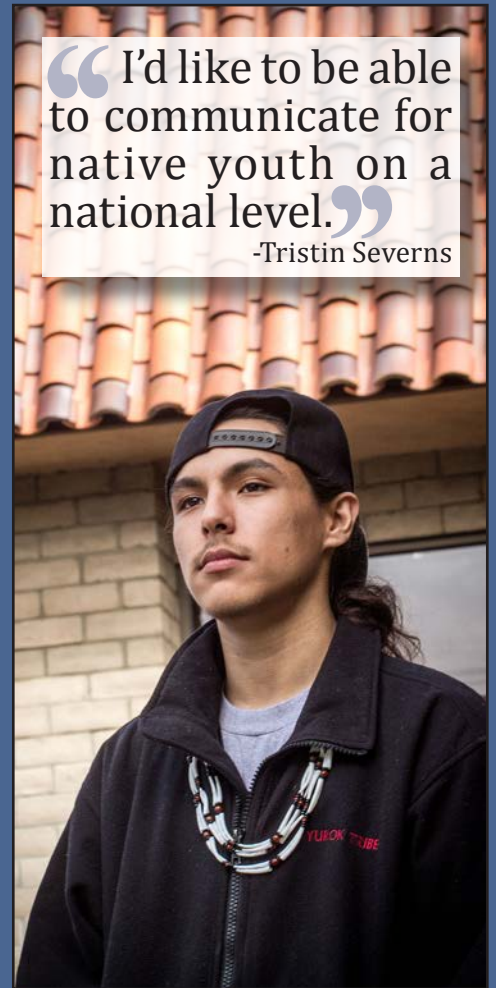
abuse of foster children.

HCTAYC Social Worker I Calla Peltier-Olson noted that the Severns award pointed to his hard work as well as what HCTAYC does right. "This award demonstrates the ability of our organization to empower youth with lived experience. It shows our process is effective in preparing young people to participate at this level," Peltier-Olson said. "It also speaks to Severns' ability to mentor other YAB leaders," noting that since he joined, the YAB has grown in participation and enthusiasm.

"It's an affirmation that there's real value in the program... that our county values young people that are capable of advancing on a system level. I think it's a big deal," said HCTAYC Social Worker III Leah Lamattina.

"I'd like to be able to communicate for native youth on a national level," Severns said about career goals.

Severns isn't resting on his laurels. He recently completed the new video "Trans-Generational Trauma on Indian Country." It will be presented along with other submissions during the Directing Change Red Carpet & Art Show at the Eureka Theater on May 6. ◀



“I'd like to be able to communicate for native youth on a national level.”  
-Tristin Severns

## May is Mental Health Matters Month planning is underway

▶ A full month of stigma-fighting events kicks off with May is Mental Health Matters Month, the biggest of which is the Mental Health Walk on Tuesday, May 9.

Participants will gather at the main Mental Health building at 720 Wood St. in Eureka at noon and march to the courthouse in support of behavioral health. Wear green to show support. Even if you can't make it that day, you can help at the sign-making party on Thursday, May 4, at the St. Joseph Health Burre Room (General Hospital Campus, 2200 Harrison St., Eureka.) Everyone is invited to the Friday, May 26, Hope Center barbecue at Carson Park (corner of H and Buhne streets in Eureka) for food and fun.

One in every four Americans experiences some form of mental illness, according to the National Institute of Mental Health. Mental health issues affect



More than a hundred people participated in last year's Mental Health Walk. This year's walk is scheduled to take place on May 9.

people regardless of gender, race, age, sexual orientation, social or economic status. The month focused on Mental Health awareness was created to help increase people's understanding of the complexity

of mental illness as well as expel myths and show support for the many people affected by mental health challenges who are working to improve their lives. ◀

# Social Services team recognized for efficiency

► Social Services is being celebrated by state officials for its speed and efficiency in processing local client CalFresh requests. Staff was presented with the Recognition of Excellence award from Kim McCoy-Wade, chief of the CalFresh Branch of the California Department of Social Services. The team was recorded at a 30-day application processing timeliness rate of 99.6 percent for Federal Fiscal Year 2015. This rate is made more impressive as CalFresh caseload counts increased more than 37 percent from December 2013 to December 2015. The award was presented to CalFresh Analyst Paris Bauer at the February County Welfare Directors Association of California meeting. ◀



Pictured above are representatives of the various staff who did the work earning the award, including: Intake, Task Management, Desk Duty, Call Center, General Relief and CalWORKs. Back row from left: Justin Scarfone, Paris Bauer, Matt Thompson, Jon Clower, Tammy Coe, Dave Wright and Gary Bowman. Front row from left: Shan Thacker, Chloe Brown, Katelyn Walsh, Michelle Shamp, Rachel Paz and Yuri Gamboa.

## Social Workers praised by Supervisors

► Social Workers are being celebrated and received a proclamation of support from the Board of Supervisors naming March as Social Worker Appreciation Month. “We do this work to help children and families,” said DHHS Social Worker IV Chryste Johnson. “We genuinely love the work we do.”

Social workers’ were thanked for their efforts protecting children, the elderly and other dependent adults from abuse and neglect. Their assistance to families and individuals moving into self-sufficiency and health was also acknowledged. “You don’t do it for the proclamations. It’s a calling,” said Second District Supervisor Estelle Fennell.

Fifth District Supervisor Ryan Sundberg added, “It’s one of those jobs that’s very difficult but very rewarding.” ◀



From left: Pamela Miller, Kirsten Hexberg, Supervisor Ryan Sundberg, Chryste Johnson, Emily Casselman, Angela Monson, Michele Stephens, Rosy Provino, Stephanie Weldon, Allan Daniel, Martha Rangel and Peggy Hobbs.

## Help Wanted

► DHHS is currently recruiting qualified applicants for a variety of positions. For a list of job opportunities, visit [humboldt.gov/hr](http://humboldt.gov/hr) and click **Job Opportunities**, or contact Employee Services at 707-441-5510. ◀

**Merit**  
SYSTEM SERVICES



# Crisis Intervention Team training

► Twenty-five law enforcement officers from agencies across the county gathered in late January for a four-day Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) training designed to help police and other law enforcement officials respond to situations where mental health issues are a concern.

CIT is an internationally recognized program of law enforcement training that focuses on helping police officers and other law enforcement officials identify major mental health disorders and other disabilities so that they can de-escalate potential crises in the field.

“This CIT training truly represents the best efforts of a team of leaders from multiple community agencies who see the importance of providing our law enforcement with training in responding to mental health issues,” said Mark Lamers, DHHS Mental Health branch senior program manager. “As has been found across the nation and internationally, in

communities where cooperation and collaboration exist between mental health services and law enforcement, officer safety is enhanced and consumers of mental health services benefit from support to enter services that are dedicated to their recovery.”

Since Humboldt County’s CIT trainings began in 2007, nearly 400 have completed the training, including representatives from law enforcement agencies, parks systems, ambulance services, DHHS, tribes, the Probation Department and medical facilities. ◀

Mental Health Senior Program Manager Mark Lamers.



Dr. Ruby Bayan was one of more than a dozen presenters who participated in CIT training.



Deputy Public Defender Heidi Holmquist presented her section called “Beyond Arrest.”



Eureka Police Officer Wayne Rabang, left, is presented with the CIT Officer of the Year award by Chief Andy Mills for his “recognition of the hardships faced by many of the community members he helps.”

# Volunteers aid in 2017 Point-In-Time count

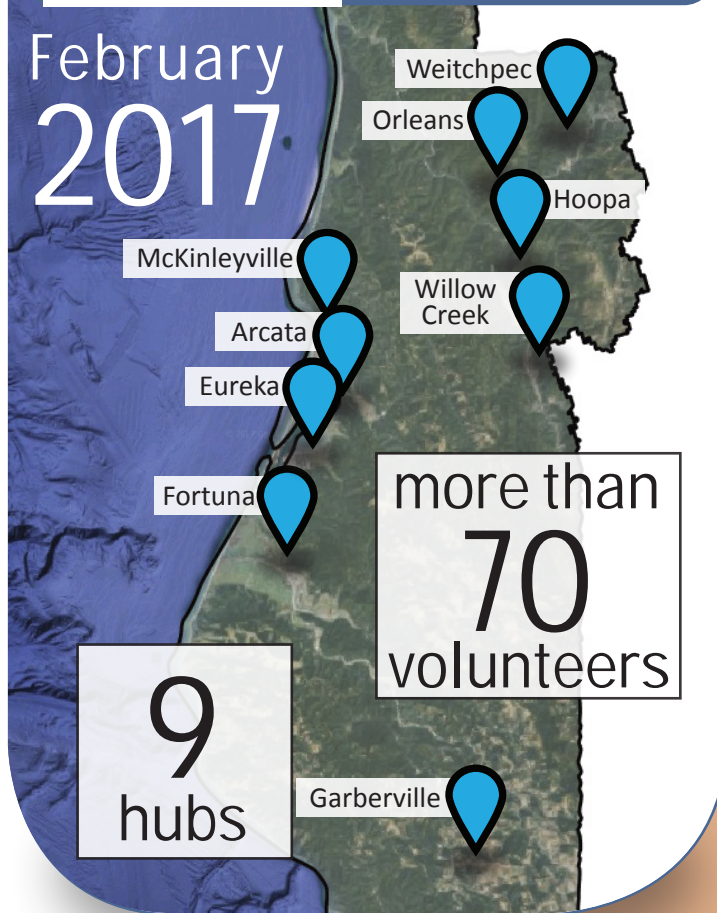
► The biennial Point-in-Time homeless count is a U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development requirement. Information gathered during this count is used by local planning departments and by county nonprofit agencies in applications for grant funding and planning. ◀

DHHS Community Health Outreach Worker Colin Bettis conducts a client survey at Mobile Outreach's boardwalk location.



## PIT COUNT BY THE NUMBERS

February  
2017



HHHC volunteers Keivan Branson, Jimento Aikhuele, John McManus (executive director of Alcohol Drug Care Services, Inc.), Ellie Bustin, Hollie Klingel and Jake Rada get ready for homeless visitors at the Serenity Inn station.



Stephanie Sanchez and Jill Hansen, volunteers from Ming Tree Realty, brave the rain at Fourth and Q streets.

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Whitney Williamson, assistant director of Psychiatric Nursing, and PK Hawk, senior program manager for the PEER and Comprehensive Community Treatment programs, echoed his sentiments.

"Establishing and maintaining relationships with community providers in order to ensure mutual clients receive the best care possible is a top priority for the medication support staff," Williamson said. "Staff found it rewarding to be acknowledged for our diligence in coordinating care with the physical health care providers."

"This was my first audit with Humboldt County Mental Health, and I was impressed with the knowledge, professionalism and support demonstrated by everyone I worked with," Hawk said. "I'm not surprised that we did such a great job."

Mental Health Interim Director Donna Wheeler said she is pleased with the results of the audit. "I'm excited to see the auditors' mention of the teamwork, dedication and passion staff displayed during this audit. The collaboration and professionalism staff showed throughout this process has been exemplary." ◀

# Cal-Learn program supports young parents to finish school, plan for future

► In 2014, almost 250,000 babies in the United States were born to teenage mothers.

Teenage pregnancy and birth significantly contribute to high school dropout rates among girls, with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimating that only 50 percent of teen mothers receive a high school diploma by 22

years of age compared to 90 percent of girls who do not give birth during adolescence.

There is, however, help available locally. Staff at the county's Cal-Learn program work with pregnant and parenting teens to address their educational, vocational, health and other social services needs.

Recently, a local teenager became pregnant and moved out on her own.



The Cal-Learn staff from left to right: Pamela Fishtrom, Kristie Serda, Laura Lee, Alicia Combs and Chloe Brown.

Her child was born with health issues requiring frequent trips to an out-of-area doctor. An enrollee in the county's Cal-Learn program, the teen received case management services to help her prioritize and make a plan. During her time in the program, she graduated from high school while continuing to receive medical treatment for her child. Currently, she is enrolled in college and studying to be a probation officer so that she can

help troubled teenagers like she once was.

The statewide Cal-Learn program is administered locally under DHHS's California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids (CalWORKs) program.

"Teen pregnancy and parenting can have long-lasting social and economic effects for teen parents and their children," said Marti Hufft, CalWORKs program manager at DHHS. "This program makes it possible for preg-

nant and parenting teenagers to receive assistance in setting and fulfilling their educational goals."

Since the program first started in 2001, hundreds of participants have completed it. Currently, four young mothers and fathers are enrolled.

For more information about this and other CalWORKs programs, and to see if you qualify, visit [humboldt.gov.org/525/CalWORKs](http://humboldt.gov.org/525/CalWORKs) or call 877-410-8809. ◀

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County Probation Department staff meet regularly to discuss individualized recovery plans, share updates, and assess progress. Simultaneously, family members are provided the tools to fully participate in those behavioral therapy plans.

"Wraparound has helped system partners team up with one another and develop coordinated plans of care for children and families," said Humboldt County Department of Health & Human Services Deputy Director of Children's Mental Health Emi Botzler-Rodgers. "It's also challenging our system to include more natural supports as we serve youth and families, empowering communities to be actively involved in improving health and well-being."

Beginning in April 2016, Children & Family Services staff started train-

ing as Wraparound coordinators and coaches. In September, eight employees attended the National Wraparound Implementation Academy in Washington D.C. The conference provided intensive training specific to implementing high-quality Wraparound care coordination and was followed by a National Wraparound Implementation Center training in October in Humboldt.

As the Wraparound process evolves, youth are encouraged to become active participants in their own assessment and treatment. They learn that they're not being blamed for anything. Wraparound teaches them what they need to work on, not simply to avoid punishment, but so their lives are easier. Currently, there are 42 young people participating in the Wraparound program which has the ability to accommodate up to 100.

The program is working. In an ongoing case, a teen was able to return to his family after multiple failed placements in group homes. The Wraparound care coordinator initially started the Wraparound process during the youth's move from a local group home to an out-of-state supervised residence, and built a relationship with the family. When the new group home placement failed, the care coordinator pulled together meetings while completing a crisis plan built on the family's strengths. Armed with new tools, the teen is back with the family and showing improved behavior.

"The beauty of Wraparound is that it has positive effects in the most challenging situations and helps youth and families literally feel 'wrapped around' with support and opportunity to heal and grow," said Botzler-Rodgers. ◀

# DHHS BOWLS FOR KIDS' SAKE...

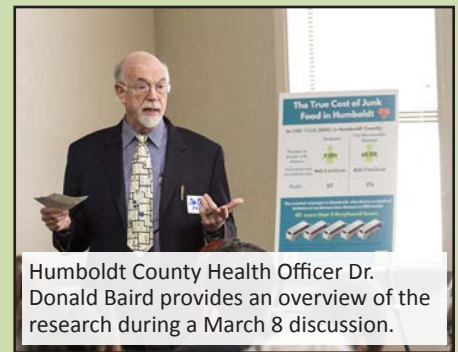


► One of Big Brothers Big Sisters of the North Coast's biggest Bowl for Kids' Sake fundraising events to date was bolstered by the efforts of DHHS staff. The two-day event brought nearly 100 teams to Harbor Lanes in Eureka for masquerade-themed fun. Sponsored DHHS bowlers collected more than \$2,095 during an event that raised

more than \$110,000.

Big Brothers Big Sisters connects children ages 6 to 16 in need of a positive role model with volunteer mentors. The program helps broaden children's horizons and improve self-esteem. Kids who have been matched with a mentor for 18 months or more are less likely to begin using illegal drugs or skip school. ◀

# County's challenges highlighted in state health survey



Humboldt County Health Officer Dr. Donald Bair provides an overview of the research during a March 8 discussion.

► In March, Public Health held a discussion about the local implications of the statewide Healthy Stores for a Healthy Community study. More than 70 stores in Humboldt were surveyed for the availability and marketing of tobacco products, alcohol, condoms and healthy and unhealthy food options. The results were not favorable, pointing to many challenges for the county. For instance, 62 percent of stores that sell alcohol placed alcohol ads at "kid-level" or near kid-friendly items such as candy or toys. None of the sampled stores advertised healthy products on their storefronts, but 61 percent of the storefronts advertised unhealthy products, including 67 percent of stores near schools.

Healthy Stores for a Healthy Community is a statewide campaign formed by tobacco prevention, nutrition, alcohol abuse prevention and STD prevention partners collaborating to improve the health of Californians by informing them about the impact of unhealthy product availability and marketing in the retail environment.

For more Humboldt County results and information on Healthy Stores for a Healthy Community, visit [healthystoreshealthycommunity.com](http://healthystoreshealthycommunity.com). ◀

# ...AND TAKES THE PLUNGE!

► DHHS's team continued its years-long tradition jumping into the Humboldt Bay in mid-February to help raise money for the Redwood Discovery Museum's 16th annual Perilous Plunge. Team "Having Fun in the Sun!" raised nearly \$750 for the museum's biggest fundraiser of the year. All proceeds benefit the museum's programs and camps. ◀



From left: Michele Stephens, Chris Olson, Emi Botzler-Rodgers, Vonnie Fierro, Terry Nelson and Melissa Chilton.

# Health Fair benefits community

► St. Joseph Hospital's annual Health, Wellness and Resource Fair brought hundreds of residents to the Bayshore Mall on Feb. 4. DHHS staff participated with several outreach and education tables.

The [Smile Humboldt](#) booth had free tooth care kits and teeth checks thanks to the participation of Public Health staff, Growing Smiles Pediatric Dentistry and Dr. George Epperson's office. ◀



From left: Carla Avila, Catherine DeSantis, Emily Hill, Dr. George Epperson, Eva Adams, Michele Johnson, Kathy Caterby and Leigh Pierre-Oetker.



Sandy Earl was on hand to talk nutrition.



Eva Adams and Emily Hill apply a fluoride varnish to a young attendee.



Sarah Nelson chats with an attendee about Public Health's family violence prevention program.



DHHS's Oral Health Consultant Leigh Pierre-Oetker, center, talks to booth visitors about Smile Humboldt programs.