



Spring 2019

Groundbreaking held for The Center at McKinleyville



Community partners gathered April 15 to celebrate the groundbreaking for The Center at McKinleyville at the facility's future site on Heartwood Drive.

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May is full of celebrations and activities aimed at reducing stigma and raising awareness for people working toward mental health. See page 9 for the full calendar of events.



▶ A coalition of agencies and service providers broke ground April 15 on The Center at McKinleyville, a one-stop location for services, information and activities for community members in McKinleyville and the northern region of Humboldt County.

The Center was planned and developed through a collaboration between the McKinleyville Family Resource Center (MFRC), Humboldt County Department of Health & Human Services (DHHS), North Coast Regional Child Support Services, Open Door Community Health Centers, Trinidad Rancheria Tribal Social Services and the Humboldt State University Department of Social Work.

Up to 57 staff will work out of The Center, providing a range of services to current and future clients, including children, families and adults.

MFRC Executive Director Hillarie Beyer said, "We recognize that the social issues we are attempting to address are complex and require that we work together if we are to move toward our vision of a vibrant community where people are healthy and connected. I am so excited that we will soon be able to turn that vision into a

reality."

The Center was first envisioned in 2012 as a way to bring services closer to residents in the northern and eastern parts of the county.

DHHS Director Connie Beck said, "This project will limit the need for some of our county's most vulnerable residents to travel to Eureka to seek assistance. These agencies working together so closely means referrals often will be made down the hall rather than to another location, allowing staff to serve this area more efficiently."

The MFRC received more than \$450,000 in grant funding from the S.H. Cowell Foundation to cover the costs of initial planning. Once The Center is complete, DHHS will lease a portion of the building and provide the bulk of the financial support through a combination of federal and state funding with no impact on the county's General Fund.

The 13,400 square-foot building, located at 1615 Heartwood Drive near the intersection of Central Avenue, is expected to open later this year. ◀

Director's Report

by Connie Beck



► Each year, employees from the County Administrative Office ask county department heads for some of our good news stories to include in the county's budget book. Taking time to think about these stories gives me a chance to reflect on the work we and our partners are doing throughout the community and provide a few highlights.

Deployed staff to Northern California wildfires

Last year, California's wildfire season was the deadliest and most destructive on record. DHHS was one of many agencies to provide mutual aid to our neighboring counties during these disasters. We sent Public Health nurses, a Public Education Officer to assist with emergency communications and a Registered Environmental Health Specialist from our Environmental Health Division who acted as a community liaison offering support and referrals to recovery resources. Thanks to all who served.

Launched Helping Humboldt

Late last summer we launched Helping Humboldt, an occupational empowerment program that provides day-labor opportu-

nities to individuals with significant barriers to work and in need of work readiness.

To date, more than 130 clients have been a part of the program that provides job skills to assist participants into permanent employment including soft skills like being punctual and learning how to maintain work relationships to more concrete skills like landscaping.

I am proud to say that in these past few months, our crew has picked up more than 1000 pounds of trash from across the community, supported 13 county and community events and 20 of our participants have secured permanent employment.

[Learn more about Helping Humboldt on page 4.](#)

Landed \$6.5 million in mental health grants

And finally, thanks to three grants totaling nearly \$6.5 million, we've been able to beef up our mental health services for people across the county.

All three awards are Mental Health Services Oversight and Accountability Commission SB 82 Triage personnel grants and include nearly \$1.2 million for our Adult and Children & Family Services' mobile response

teams (MRT).

So far, we've been able to hire additional staff to work on the adult team, making it possible for them to provide direct services from 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. daily.

Assessing individuals in the field means we can link them to services in the least restrictive environment possible, freeing up the Crisis Stabilization Unit and Semipervirens for folks who require that higher level of mental health services. The Children's MRT grant is providing similar mental health services to young people between 0 and 21 years old across the county.

The largest grant, totaling more than \$5.2 million, is a partnership between the Humboldt County Office of Education and DHHS Mental Health and will provide children with mental health services in schools across the county. Staff is currently being hired for these positions with the program likely to launch in late spring.

These three stories are just a few examples of DHHS's accomplishments from the past year. I look forward to sharing more good news stories with you as the year goes on. ◀



Help Wanted

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

Merit
SYSTEM SERVICES



MIST program continues to expand

► It's been four years since DHHS Mental Health staff joined forces with the Eureka Police Department (EPD) and launched the Mobile Intervention and Services Team, or MIST. And with the program's success has come continued expansion.

The original team was launched in 2015, pairing Mental Health staff and Eureka police officers to work specifically with people experiencing homelessness in need of help stabilizing their mental health and securing services and assistance to avoid frequent interactions with law enforcement.

DHHS MIST Program Manager Kelly Johnson has been part of the team since its inception and is a proponent of bringing it to other jurisdictions. She said the program receives funding from Measure Z, the half-cent sales tax Humboldt

County voters approved in 2014, which supports public safety and essential services.

"MIST is effective in identifying hard to reach, hard to serve clients that have historically fallen through the cracks," she said. "We've seen a dramatic decrease in police contacts and psychiatric hospitalizations after assisting people with housing and mental health services."

EPD Sgt. Leonard La France, who supervises his department's MIST officers, said the collaboration has been positive for Eureka.

"MIST helps us address the underlying issues of home-

lessness—addiction, mental illness and housing—and provides us with actual resources to improve upon or eliminate these issues," he said. "Being able to effectively address these issues makes a positive impact on the often associated crime and disorder and creates a safer community for all."

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about bringing the program to its police department, and the two quickly teamed up.

Officer Heidi Groszmann has been with APD for the past 14 years and said she has seen a marked improvement getting services for people with serious mental illness since MIST came to town. "Since APD and MIST started collaborating, APD has been able to engage in outreach contacts and less enforcement while offering and providing services for this population.

Groszmann said MIST is a great example of "law enforcement and mental health staff working together for a safer community."

Johnson is currently talking to the Humboldt County Sheriff's Office about expanding into its jurisdiction. "We know that accessing mental health services outside

of the greater Eureka area can be challenging. Our goal is to identify and outreach to individuals needing mental health services that have historically been underserved."

La France said MIST has made a positive impact in Eureka. "Instead of placing Band-Aids on these issues, we have the ability to actually heal the wounds." ◀



Eureka's Mobile Intervention and Services Team, made up of Eureka police and DHHS Mental Health staff, participates in ride-alongs twice a week.



Arcata's Mobile Intervention and Services Team, made up of Arcata police and DHHS Mental Health staff, participates in weekly ride-alongs.



Helping Humboldt

An Occupational Empowerment Program of the Humboldt County Department of Health & Human Services

Program is Helping Humboldt

► Since DHHS's Employment Training Division launched Helping Humboldt in August, more than 160 clients have spent nearly 1,090 hours participating in the program, which provides day-labor opportunities to individuals with significant barriers to work



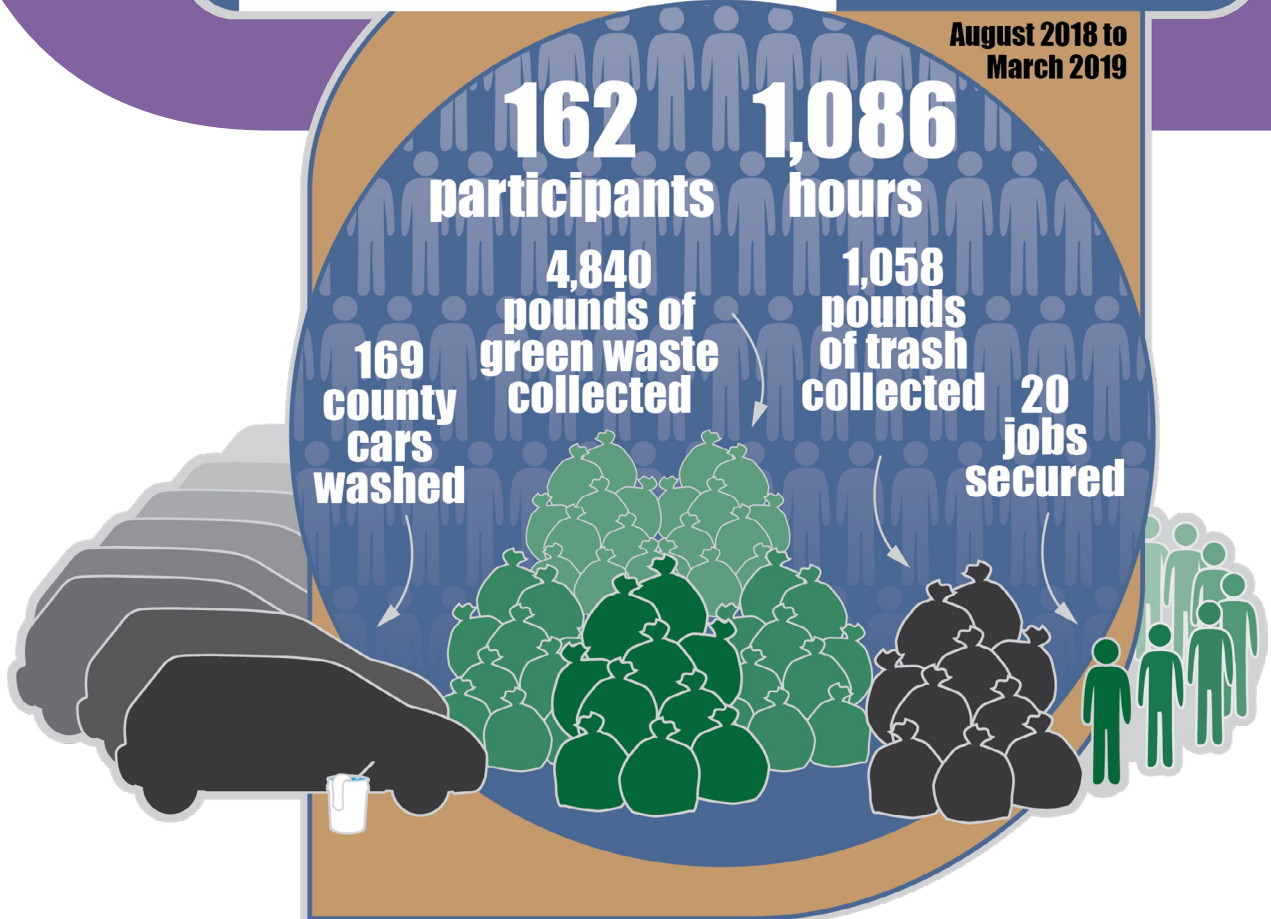
Helping Humboldt staff from left to right: Steve Brackenbury, Jean Chiles, Julian Lennon, Melissa Furbee and Noah Urban.

and in need of work readiness. Employment Training Manager Connie Lorenzo said, "We are seeing significant engagement with the Helping Humboldt participants who are taking pride in

helping the community and being seen doing so. It allows them to reframe any mistaken impressions others may have about their situations—they want to work, and they want to contribute." ◀

Helping Humboldt BY THE NUMBERS

August 2018 to March 2019



Long-time volunteer's memory honored during Hope Center's 11th anniversary party

► Local mental health advocate Ruth Needham saw a connection between healthy food and mental health prompting her to regularly cook and deliver homemade soup to the Hope Center for staff and participants to enjoy until shortly before her death in 2016.

In late March, two of Ruth's children, Patti and Pete Needham, gathered at the Hope Center in Eureka to celebrate its 11th anniversary and be a part of the event dedicating a custom-made bench to their late mother who passed away at the age of 94.

The bench, donated by the Humboldt County Chapter of the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), is engraved with redwood trees which her daughter said is appropriate. "She loved redwood trees," Patti Needham said. "When she first got here she was a docent in the state parks."

The siblings have a younger brother who they said lives locally and experiences mental health challenges, and that they said is one of the things that spurred Ruth to channel her volunteer efforts toward

mental health advocacy.

"The last 20 years she devoted her time to mental health," Patti Needham said. She said her mother was instrumental in starting the Hope Center which is located on the main Mental Health campus and provides participants with a safe, positive environment to learn to live the best life possible—personally, socially, mentally and emotionally.

DHHS Peer Coach III Kellie Jack said the Hope Center accommodates about 80 visitors a day. "We have classes and meetings and focus on empowerment and education," she said. "We allow people to be who they are." She said almost all of the center's staff are certified peer specialists.

Jack, who started as a volunteer at the Hope Center and now runs it, remembers the many times Ruth visited bringing her

soups and even adding homemade guacamole to her offerings at times. Something that was always appreciated.

Pete Needham said he was touched to be a part of the dedication for his mother. "I knew she was involved in the Behavioral Health Board," but he said he was just learning about the extent of her involvement in mental health advocacy. "It's pretty cool."

Patti Needham said the dedication was emotional for her, and something she knew would have meant a lot to her mother. "She felt it was important for people to have a place to talk to each other, learn new skills and spend time with peers that wasn't in a hospital setting," Patti Needham said.

With that in mind, Jack said the bench will be a place that people can sit to talk to each other when

they need a friend, something she said was important to Ruth Needham and inspired the bench's placard which reads, "In Memory of Ruth Needham, Hope Center Volunteer, A Listening Friend. ◀"



Front row from left to right: Patti Needham, Kellie Jack and Pete Needham celebrate the Hope Center's 11th anniversary and bench dedication with center participants and NAMI representative Debbe Hartridge behind in red.

HUD grants help local homeless assistance programs

► More than \$860,000 has been distributed to eight Humboldt County homeless assistance programs to help keep people off the streets.

The funds are part of more than \$415 million in Continuum of Care Homeless Assistance grants awarded earlier this year to programs across the state by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

Locally, grant renewals were awarded to Arcata House Partnership, 2-1-1 and DHHS. Each of these entities is a member of the Humboldt Housing and Homeless Coalition (HHHC).

Most of the \$861,315 in local funding will be used for permanent supportive housing programs, which provide rental assistance and supportive services to chronically homeless people with one or more serious disabling conditions. Supportive services may include counseling, medication support, linkage to medical care, case management services, training in independent living skills, substance use disorder support and other services that can help a client maintain housing.

“This award from HUD to the HHHC goes directly to programs that provide services and housing for people experiencing homelessness in Humboldt County,” said Sally Hewitt, HHHC co-chair and DHHS senior program manager. “We will be able

to continue providing services to youth and adults that have significant disabilities. This assistance helps participants pay rent and security deposits, provides safe transitional housing for youth and supports services for participants to promote housing stability.”

This year, Arcata House Partnership (AHP) received \$448,780 from HUD for its permanent supportive housing programs.

“Arcata House Partnership is pleased that we can continue to provide housing vouchers and case management support for clients in our permanent supportive housing programs with this money,” said AHP Director Darlene Spoor. “This funding will ensure that people who have a low income will continue to be housed. AHP is committed to supporting the neediest people in our community.”

2-1-1 Humboldt received \$31,549 to continue providing coordinated entry services which streamline the process of finding housing for chronically homeless people, focusing on housing the most vulnerable first.

DHHS received \$213,067 for its permanent supportive housing program for chronically homeless people with serious mental illness. The department also received \$82,388 for its HIV/AIDS Re-Housing Team—Project HART—for chronically homeless disabled people and/or families living with HIV/AIDS, and \$69,500 to administer the countywide Homeless Management Information System database on behalf of the HHHC.

These annual HUD grants are awarded competitively to programs across the state and country to meet the needs of their homeless clients. The grants fund a wide variety of programs, from outreach and assessment to direct housing assistance and other activities for homeless people and families.

“The HHHC has received this funding every year since 2006,” Hewitt said. “Humboldt can be proud of its ongoing efforts to end homelessness.”

The HHHC is a coalition of housing advocates, businesses, funders, elected officials, services and housing providers, faith-based organizations and other community stakeholders working together to identify and address local housing needs. In Humboldt County, the HHHC is the lead organization for homeless issues and the federally designated Continuum of Care. ◀



PIT unsheltered count numbers available

► More than 1,470 unsheltered people were counted in Humboldt County during this year's Point-in-Time (PIT) count, according to results from the Jan. 23 count of people experiencing homelessness.

This year's count showed the largest number of unsheltered people in Eureka, followed by the Arcata-Manila area, the Garberville-Redway-Benbow area and McKinleyville.

More than 140 volunteers from across the county participated in the count, which takes place in communities across the U.S. on a single night in January, as required by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). Numbers from the count are used by the state of California to allocate funding to counties to address homelessness and housing.

The biennial PIT count, conducted by the Humboldt Housing and Homeless Coalition (HHHC), documents the number of sheltered and unsheltered homeless people.

Sally Hewitt, co-chair of the HHHC and senior program manager with DHHS, said this year the county used a software program to conduct the count which made it possible to have some results available to the community much earlier than in previous years when the count was done by paper surveys.

"We are still finalizing some of the numbers from the surveys, but we know this was a very successful PIT count," she said. "This is due to the amazing work done by many volunteers who turned out early to begin counting and

surveying people experiencing homelessness."

On Jan. 23, volunteers connected with homeless people throughout the county to administer voluntary surveys with questions about age, physical and mental health status and where they slept the night before. In addition to surveying people, for the first time, volunteers were also able to conduct an observational count of people who were sleeping or who declined to participate in the survey.

For the unsheltered portion of the PIT, volunteers could only count people who fall under the HUD definition: An individual or family with a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings, including a car, park, abandoned building, bus or train station, airport or camp ground.

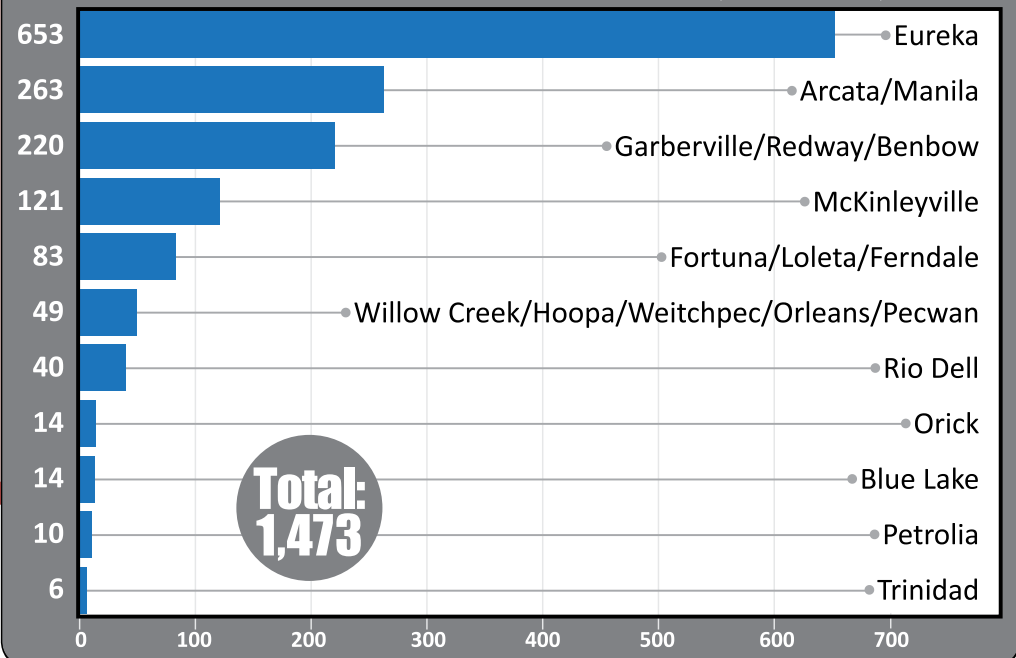
Numbers for the people in the sheltered count, which HUD defines as an individual or family living in a supervised publicly or privately operated shelter

designated to provide temporary living arrangement (including congregate shelters, transitional housing, and hotels and motels paid for by charitable organizations or by federal, state, or local government programs for low-income individuals), will be forthcoming.

The PIT provides a snapshot of the homeless population at a specific point in time, and Hewitt said the success of this year's count is due in big part to community volunteers. "Thank you to all who participated and supported this work that directly benefits the communities of Humboldt," she said. "Their work assures we will have the funds we need to help people into housing, to assist them in retaining housing and to help prevent currently housed people from becoming homeless."

The unsheltered count, below, indicates the number of people who slept in a place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation, the night before the Jan. 23, 2019 count. ◀

Point-in-Time Count: Unsheltered, Jan. 23, 2019



Grants help boost Mental Health's countywide response



Mental Health staff from left to right: Cassie Lethin, Bryony Shaw, Dylan McClure, Kelly Johnson, Gabe Bennett, India Garza, Jet DeKruise, Windy Scott, Jennifer Oliphant, Terri Wagner, Shamioka Kiel, Trysta Hays and Betty Garfield.

► Three grants totaling nearly \$6.5 million are making it possible for Mental Health to expand its services to people across the county.

All three awards are Mental Health Services Oversight and Accountability Commission SB 82 Triage personnel grants and include nearly \$700,000 to hire more Mobile Response Team (MRT) staff to serve adults, and more than \$500,000 additional funding for Children & Family Services MRT staff.

The grant funding is making it possible the teams to provide direct services from 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. daily.

Mental Health Deputy Director Paul Bugnacki said assessing individuals in the field means they can be linked to ser-

vices in the least restrictive environment possible. “Now the Crisis Stabilization Unit and Sempervirens are not being overly impacted with folks who did not require that higher level of mental health services,” he said.

Mental Health’s Children’s MRT grant is providing similar mental health services to young people between 0 and 21 years old across the county.

The largest grant, totaling more than \$5.2 million, is a partnership between the Humboldt County Office of Education and DHHS Mental Health and will provide children with mental health services in schools across the county. Staff is currently being hired for these positions with the program likely to launch in late spring. ◀

ETD staff recognized for work with Botanical Garden

► Staff from DHHS's Employment Training Division (ETD) were honored earlier this year, at the Humboldt Botanical Garden during the annual volunteer luncheon.

Award recipients are selected by the Humboldt Botanical Garden Foundation Board of Directors and Garden staff.

Employment Training Manager Connie Lorenzo said the program's job development team places Work Experience (WEX) trainees from DHHS's CalWORKs Welfare-to-Work program and from the Humboldt Second Chance Program, which helps formerly incarcerated people get jobs.

Garden Manager Terry Kramer said they have been working with ETD staff for the past 10 years. "They're a great source of labor for us."

Kramer said being a nonprofit, the Botanical Garden can't

afford to hire a large staff, but the work still needs to get done.

She said participants learn basic gardening skills like how to operate lawn mowers and weed wackers, how to trim, mow, fertilize, irrigate and propagate. Kramer said in addition to the gardening skills, participants are learning about the importance of other things, like getting to work on time and being part of a team. "I think you have to be patient and understanding. This is a work training program."

"The Garden's staff provide strong supervision and training that prepares clients for the rigor and expectations of work as well as providing them vocational landscaping skills," Lorenzo said. "The partnership benefits DHHS, but has benefited the Garden too in that it provides much needed labor to help maintain

and keep the gardens in exhibition shape."

Through this partnership, Kramer said the Botanical Garden has hired two garden assistants. Although they can't hire everyone, Kramer said she has checked in with managers at local nurseries when dedicated program graduates are ready to find jobs and put in a good word for them.

DHHS Social Services Deputy Director Kelly Hampton said ETD staff is innovative in its approach to helping clients gain the experience they need to work toward employment. "This award is another validation of the excellent work being conducted by the ETD staff as well as showcasing the successful partnership they have with the Botanical Garden," Hampton said. "I am so proud of ETD staff and of the work they do for the community." ◀



From left to right: Evelyn Giddings, David Lemm, Connie Lorenzo, Apryle Mercado, Terry Kramer, Sherman Landry and Candice Painter. Photo submitted by Humboldt Botanical Garden.

MAY 2019 is Mental Health Matters Month

Date/ Times	Event	Location/Contact
Wednesday, May 1 2:30-3:30 p.m.	Ropes for Hope: A Jump Roping Event for Ages 16-26	433 M St., Eureka sfarmer@co.humboldt.ca.us
Wednesday, May 1 2-4 p.m.	Sign-Making for Mental Health Walk and Rally	433 M St., Eureka DLTaylor@co.humboldt.ca.us
Friday, May 3 11 a.m.-3 p.m.	Health and Wellness Fair Event.	Farmers' Market at Garberville Town Square aterrones@shchd.org
Friday, May 3 7-8 p.m.	Baileterapia: Dance Therapy	Multi-Generational Center 2280 Newburg Rd, Fortuna Caterina.Kein2@stjoe.org
Monday, May 6 7-8 p.m.	Baileterapia: Dance Therapy	Jefferson Community Center 1000 S St., Eureka Caterina.Kein2@stjoe.org
Tuesday, May 7 9 a.m.	Mental Health Proclamation	Board of Supervisors Chambers Humboldt County Courthouse, Eureka mmontgomery@co.humboldt.ca.us
Tuesday, May 7 11:50 a.m.-1:30 pm	Mental Health Walk and Rally	720 Wood St. (Hope Center) to Courthouse kjack@co.humboldt.ca.us
Wednesday, May 8 5-7 p.m.	ReFrame Your Brain Opening and Artists' Reception	Eureka Library, 1313 Third St., Eureka PublicHealthPEI@co.humboldt.ca.us
Wednesday, May 8 5:30-7 p.m.	Screening of <i>Inside Out</i> (Spanish)	Rohner Recreation Hall 5 Park St., Fortuna Caterina.Kein2@stjoe.org
Thursday, May 9 4-6 p.m.	<i>The Dark Side of the Full Moon: A Film about Postpartum Depression</i>	Jefferson Community Center 1000 B St., Eureka eadams@co.humboldt.ca.us
Friday, May 10 10 a.m.-4 p.m.	Art for Life and Hope Center Art Show	Rainbow Room, 720 Wood St., Eureka kjack@co.humboldt.ca.us
Friday, May 10 4:30-9:30 p.m.	The Alternatives Fest	Outer Space, 1100 M St., Arcata HDuffy@co.humboldt.ca.us
Friday, May 17 11 a.m.- 2 p.m.	Hope Center Wellness Connection BBQ	Carson Park, H St., Eureka kjack@co.humboldt.ca.us
Saturday, May 18 11 a.m.- 4 pm	Be Well Self-Care Fair	Eureka Library, 1313 Third St., Eureka cbalkovek1@co.humboldt.ca.us
Tuesday, May 21 9 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.	LGBTQ Awareness, Sensitivity and Competency Training	Humboldt Area Foundation 363 Indianola Cutoff, Bayside publichealthPEI@co.humboldt.ca.us
Wednesday, May 22 9-11:30 a.m.	Question-Persuade-Refer Suicide Prevention Training	Community Wellness Center 908 Seventh St., Eureka mmontgomery@co.humboldt.ca.us
Wednesday, May 22 5:30-7 p.m.	Screening of <i>Inside Out</i> (Spanish)	Jefferson Community Center 1000 B St., Eureka caterina.Kein2@stjoe.org
Thursday, May 23 2-4:30 p.m.	Screening of <i>Inside Out</i> (English)	Eureka Community Resource Center 35 W Third St., Eureka brian.olson@stjoe.org
Thursday, May 23 1-4 p.m.	Willow Creek Mental Health Awareness BBQ	Veteran's Park, 100 Kimtu Rd. Willow Creek Karen.diers@stjoe.org

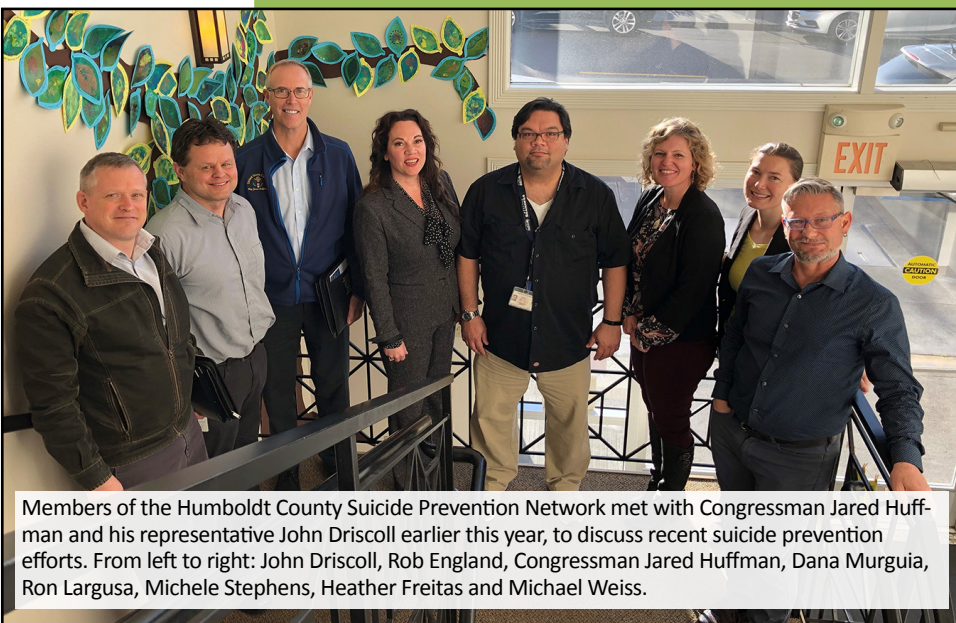
ALL EVENTS ARE FREE! For more information, email publichealthPEI@co.humboldt.ca.us or call 707-268-2132.



We ♥ our Social Workers



DHHS Social Workers and staff gathered at the courthouse in early March to celebrate the Board of Supervisors declaration of March as Social Worker Appreciation month.



Members of the Humboldt County Suicide Prevention Network met with Congressman Jared Huffman and his representative John Driscoll earlier this year, to discuss recent suicide prevention efforts. From left to right: John Driscoll, Rob England, Congressman Jared Huffman, Dana Murguia, Ron Largusa, Michele Stephens, Heather Freitas and Michael Weiss.

Suicide prevention efforts boosted locally

Recognizing Public Health Week



The Humboldt County Board of Supervisors proclaimed the first week in April as Public Health Week, in recognition of the dedicated staff who work to protect and improve the health and safety of county residents.