

STAY IN TOUCH WITH US!

That's the theme of the innovative Independent Living Skills (ILSP) Graduation Binder. This new concept developed by the Employment & Human Services staff, along with members of the ILSP staff and emancipated youth gives teens leaving the foster care system the tools to stay in touch with each other and with ILSP.

After a story about the binder appeared in the Contra Costa Times, requests for more information about the binder and for the copies of the binder itself poured in from across the state and nation.

The Binder is being given to all foster youth who become 18 years of age, graduate from the program and strike out on their own. Last year, there were 140 graduates. The binder features a passworded CD with all their critical documents including birth certificates, school transcripts and medical information. It contains gift cards for clothes, groceries and household items. The printed materials include a 52-page resource guide, an address book and 18 month calendar. If you'd like to support a teen in foster care by tutoring, mentoring or donating household goods or money, please contact Don Graves, Program Manager at (925) 957-2404. If you want to learn more about our ILSP program go to www.cocoilsp.org. ❏

BRAGGING RIGHTS

Congratulations To...

CSAC Challenge Awards of Excellence is the California State Association of Counties annual statewide program honoring innovation in county government. This year, out of 234 entries, the Employment & Human Services Department received one of 10 Awards of Excellence for its Independent Living Skills Program (ILSP) Speakers Bureau. ILSP readies youth for their departure from foster care. In addition, the county received three Awards of Merit for the Consolidated Veterans Memorial Building project, the Contra Costa County Watershed Calendar and the Keeping Employment equals Your Success (KEYS) auto loan program. Finally, the county received four Honorable Mention Awards for four entries – Solution to a Budget Crisis by the Building Inspection Department, Verde school's "Uniforms for All" program, the Juvenile Justice Treatment Alternatives: Chris Adams and Summit Center Programs and the Contra Costa One-Stop Consortium. Congratulations to all of the county staff that worked on these projects!

Melinda Self, Advanced Attorney with the Department of Child Support Services, was recognized by the Western

Interstate Child Support Enforcement Council (WICSEC) as the 2005 winner for Outstanding Individual Achievement.

The Contra Costa County Library received two out of four Public Relations Excellence Awards for libraries with budgets of \$15 million or more. The award winning programs were: a Programming Award for Teen Reading Road Trip and an Advocacy Award for 5K Fun Run/Walk.

Doug Humphrey, an adult learner and volunteer with Project Second Chance, Contra Costa County Library's Adult Literacy program, was honored as an "Everyday Hero" at the State Librarian's breakfast in Pasadena, in November. He was one of five volunteers to be selected from throughout the state and has been a tireless advocate for the library and for literacy.

Health Services' Public Health Division's TeenAge Program and Tobacco Prevention Project, was one of six recipients of a grant from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Foundation to help prevent smoking and tobacco use among area youth. For more information call Denise Dennis at (925) 313-6825.

Contra Costa's Homeless Outreach Program for Encampments (HOPE) was honored with an Exemplary Program Award by the Substance Abuse

Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) at a ceremony in Washington, D.C.

Health Services' Community Education and Information Unit received a Gold Award given to the department by the National Public Health Information Coalition. The award was for creativity and results on its redesigned website (cchealth.org), which is now logging more than 60,000 visits each month.

George Nakamura, supervising environmental health specialist for Health Services, has been showered with honors of late. First, Underwriters Laboratories (the UL on many electrical appliance cords) gave him a 10-year Achievement Award for his service to their Environmental and Public Health Council. Then, former presidents of the National Environmental Health Association voted George their Past Presidents Award for chairing the Technical Safety Subcommittee of the association's Food Safety and Protection Section.

Dr. Cheri Pies, Director of Health Services' Family, Maternal and Child Health Programs, was honored recently for her groundbreaking work on women's health throughout her career. The National Women's Health Network cited Cheri as one of its "30 for the 30th" project celebrating the organization's 30th year.

county clips

A Newsletter for Employees of Contra Costa County



A YEAR IN REVIEW... LOOKING AHEAD

By John Sweeten, County Administrator

This issue of County Clips comes out at a time that unfortunately misses the holidays. Please accept my belated hope that you and your loved ones were able to share this special time of year together, grateful for the good things that have come your way and looking forward to the new year.

As most of you know, I will be retiring on March 1, 2006, after 37 years in public service. Like all of you, I have looked forward for many years to this date. I must share with you, however, that as the time grows shorter I increasingly fret about how I will get along without the stimulating issues and wonderful people that occupy all of my time each and every day here at the County.

I feel privileged to have had the opportunity to serve the Board of Supervisors and the citizens of Contra Costa County. I am proud to have been associated in a professional way with each of you. I will always admire the talented and dedicated managers and line employees whose knowledge, experience and efforts allow the County to continue to provide the critical services that I call "the glue" that holds our diverse community together.

This has been an exciting time to be part of county government. Take pride in what you do, and I wish all of you the best. ❏

CONTRA COSTA COUNTY LIBRARY RECEIVES LESHER FOUNDATION GRANT TO ESTABLISH A JUVENILE HALL LIBRARY

The Contra Costa County Library was awarded a \$100,000 grant from the Dean & Margaret Leshar Foundation to purchase materials and supplies for a library in the new John



A. Davis Contra Costa County Juvenile Hall in Martinez. The facility opened in June 2005 with a room designated as a library, but without funds for books and other resources. In a joint partnership, the Contra Costa County Library, the County Probation Department and the Contra Costa County Office of Education will use this grant to begin offering library services to the thousands of teens incarcerated each year in Contra Costa County.

The focus of the Juvenile Hall Library will be to foster an interest in reading, improve reading skills, and encourage critical thinking. Teens who regularly spend time reading are more likely to become independent learners and studies consistently show that improving education reduces recidivism. For many of the County's incarcerated teens, the library will be a starting point for lifelong learning, a vital step in the transformation from past lifestyles to a more promising future.

Library materials for the new library will include books and other media to support both recreational reading and schoolwork. Computers in the library will provide access to the library materials, select databases and the Internet. This equipment will also allow the Contra Costa County Library to expand its award-winning Technology for Teens in Transition program, where volunteers are paired with incarcerated teens to provide weekly mentoring on how to use the Internet to obtain vital information. In addition to a variety of resources, the Juvenile Hall Library will offer special programs for the teens, such as books discussion groups, art and music events, poetry contests, and local author presentations.

The Dean & Margaret Leshar Foundation provides grants to nonprofits serving residents of Contra Costa County in the areas of education, the cultural arts and programs and services for children and families.

COUNTY MAPS AND PROPERTY INFORMATION IS AVAILABLE ONLINE

Did you know that Contra Costa County has a web page with maps and information about every property in our county? It was developed as a way for the public, county staff and partner agencies to quickly and easily get access to information that they need. It can be found on the web at <http://www.ccmmap.us>.

Much of this information was previously spread across many departments and difficult to obtain. But it is now readily available through this one web site. Users can view aerial photographs of any portion of the county, check their zoning (if located in unincorporated county), find assessed property values for real estate, see how large their lot is, find out who their County Supervisor is, look at school district boundaries, view creeks, watersheds, county general plan designations and more.

The Contra Costa County GIS program started in 2002. It is a formalized program to share mapping and land related information across departments. This system, a Geographic Information System (GIS), has grown to include the County departments of: Building Inspection, Community Development,

Public Works, Sheriff-Coroner, Information Technology, County Administrator's Office, Agriculture, Health Services, Clerk-Recorders Office, the County Assessor, and the Contra Costa County Fire Protection District.

Cooperation between the departments has paid off. County employees use the GIS web site in their daily work instead of more time consuming manual research. And the GIS is becoming more integrated with other computer systems. It is being used for emergency vehicle dispatching, crime analysis, permitting systems, traffic planning, environmental impact studies, zoning, general plan development, emergency response, homeland security, tracking hazardous materials, drainage and clean-water reporting and more.

If you would like to take a look at the online GIS application, visit <http://www.ccmmap.us>. Then select Interactive Mapping to start your search.

Questions? Contact John Huie at 925-313-1318

STATE SYSTEM CHANGE MAY AFFECT CHILD SUPPORT PAYMENTS

Federal law requires that child support payments be processed through a central location. Beginning in March 2006, all child support payments made to Contra Costa County Department of Child Support Services (DCSS) will be processed at the new Statewide Disbursement Unit (SDU). DCSS will continue to accept payments and forward them to the SDU in Sacramento so that a check can be issued to the custodial party. In May 2006, all child support payments made in California will be made and processed through the SDU.

Note to non-custodial parents: Currently DCSS processes wage assignments based on the date the payment was withheld from the payer's wages or, in the case of payment by cash, credit card, checks or other means, according to the date payment is received. This will no longer be the case. Payments made by non-custodial parents will be credited on the day received by the SDU. To ensure proper credit for the month intended and to avoid the possibility of the account showing delinquent, 100% of the monthly amount due must be received by DCSS by the 20th of the month.

Note to custodial parties: Checks may be delayed 7 to 10 days during the change over to the SDU. It is possible that you will not receive a payment in February depending upon the processing date of the payment by the SDU.

Custodial and non-custodial parties may check on payments 24 hours a day by phone or on the web. Call 888-252-9656 or visit www.casespaymentweb.com.



Preparing for Disasters

If we have learned anything from Hurricane Katrina and other recent natural and manmade disasters, it is that we must be prepared to survive during the worst of circumstances for at least 3 or 4 days. Taking personal responsibility now can save lives! For information on what to do to prepare for disaster, go to the Sheriff's web site at www.cocosherriff.org, to the Emergency Services link. There you will find the Family Preparedness Resource Guide, and other preparedness information. Remember, if we are prepared for an earthquake, we will be ready for just about any other devastation that may occur. Having a family plan and supplies for 3 to 4 days will make all the difference in the world when disaster strikes.

BAY AREA COUNTIES LAUNCH JUNK MAIL REDUCTION CAMPAIGN

Every year 100 million trees are cut down to produce 100 billion pieces of junk mail sent to American households. In an effort to address this concern 110 Bay Area cities and 9 counties have joined forces to create a Bay Area Stop Junk Mail Kit.

The Kit, focuses on easy ways Bay Area residents can substantially reduce junk mail at home and at work by helping consumers reduce commercial access to their name and address so this information won't be traded, rented or sold to companies who send unwanted mail.

The Kit provides addresses and telephone numbers of organizations set up to help consumers reduce junk mail. The Kit also includes ways to contact service providers such as banks, insurance or wireless companies asking them to stop sending promotional mail.

"It's good to recycle your junk mail. It's even better to stop getting it." as the campaign motto states.

Americans collectively pay \$370,000,000 (\$370 million) a year to dispose of junk mail that doesn't get recycled. To access the Stop Junk Mail Kit online visit www.StopJunkMail.org. To request a hardcopy through the mail call the Contra Costa County Recycling Hotline at (800) 750-4096.

It's good to recycle your junk mail. It's even better to stop getting it.

Tired of dealing with junk mail? Catalogs, credit card offers, and coupons for things you don't want or need - wouldn't you be happy if you never saw junkmail again?

It may be easier than you think. Get a free Stop Junk Mail Kit. The simple format and pre-addressed postcards help you get the job done.

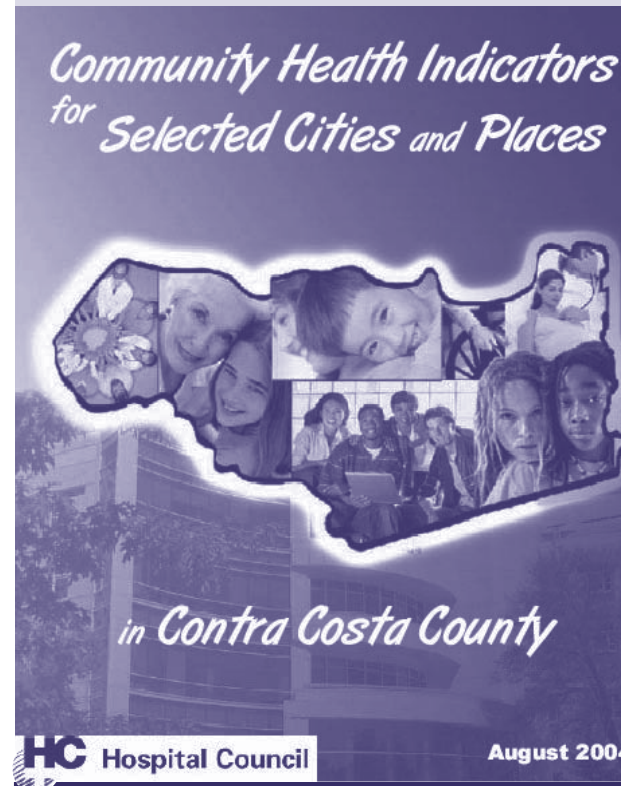
Reducing junk mail gets clutter out of your mailbox and helps protect the environment. It takes 17 trees to make a ton of paper. That means nearly 100 million trees get used for junk mail every year in the U.S.

Let's keep the trees in the forest, and get the junk mail out of your life. Call the number below, or visit our website to get your free Stop Junk Mail Kit.



BAY AREA JUNK MAIL Reduction Campaign
A partnership of 110 Bay Area cities & counties
www.StopJunkMail.org
1-800-750-4096 (press 2)

COMMUNITY HEALTH INDICATORS



Using the 2000 Census and other sources, Contra Costa Health Services has developed a report that compares the county and some of its towns and cities with each other and with the rest of the state. Titled "Community Health Indicators for Selected Cities and Places in Contra Costa County," the report was funded by the Hospital Council of Northern and Central California. It provides dramatic evidence of where the county should focus its health services and resources. The population of Contra Costa County is growing even faster than the rate for all of California, and for most indicators, our health is as good or better than the state overall. Still, there is clearly room for improvement in some areas, including some very serious killers like cancer, stroke, heart disease and chronic disease. The county is becoming older and more ethnically diverse, and there certain "health disparities" we can see between different ethnicities. Resources are shrinking, but Contra Costa Health Services seeks to continue working to reduce those disparities. The report is available online at cchealth.org/health_data/hospital_council/ and a video about it is also available to borrow by calling Dan Smith at 925-313-6833.