

APRIL 2010 E-NEWSLETTER

Traditionally, when a ship is sinking, the first persons to be loaded onto the life boats are mothers, children, and the elderly. In the recession-wracked economy of California, Sacramento policy makers have reversed this order. Deep cuts in CalWORKS, Child Care, Child Welfare, and Adult Protective Services, as well as the attempted dismantling of the In-Home Supportive Services Program, have left the most vulnerable the most exposed. The Governor's 10% cut to Child Welfare Services, for example, eliminated funding for over 400 Social Workers statewide. Here in Contra Costa County, the combination of the Governor's veto cut and previous shortfalls in state funding led to the elimination of 119 child welfare positions. Our ability to follow up on Child Abuse Investigations or to work towards the successful reunification of children with their families or their permanent placement in an alternative stable situation has been impaired. The funds we have available to assist foster youth who are transitioning into adulthood with education and housing expenses have also been reduced.

A statewide coalition to "Protect Our Children - Protect Our Future" has launched a campaign to restore this critical funding. This effort includes a "Take a Foster Youth to the Capitol" day on April 28 which will pair up foster youth with legislators from their district. [Click here](#) for more information.

In addition to Child Welfare cuts, the current economic recession has plunged thousands of children and their families into poverty. In Contra Costa County alone, over 8,000 additional children are now receiving food and/or cash assistance - a 38% increase over the last two years. New research has shown that children who fall into poverty during a recession can experience some of the same lasting negative consequences as children who grow up in poverty. Our recent presentation to the Board of Supervisors on Child Poverty provides

details on this disturbing trend and its consequences. [Click here](#) for the report.

The State's response to the rise in the number of children in poverty has been to cut CalWORKS grants and reduce child care assistance for working families. It's time to draw a line in the sand and protect our children from further cuts - it's time to protect our future.

Joe Valentine, EHSD Director

The Importance of In-Home Supportive Services

EHSD recently received a letter of gratitude from a client who wanted us to know how appreciative she was of her caregiver, an IHSS employee. We share this story with you to highlight how dedicated, important and lifesaving IHSS workers are in caring for the physically-challenged, frail and elderly in our communities.

The IHSS caregiver decided to stop by on a Sunday morning (not her regular day to provide care) to check on her client as the client had not been feeling well. She found the client unconscious and had aspirated fluid back into her lungs. When the EMT's arrived, they determined that the client was near death and needed to be transported immediately to the closest hospital, where the client remained for five days in ICU. The IHSS caregiver stayed with the client and advocated on her behalf with hospital staff until the client was stabilized and able to return home.

The IHSS client wanted us to know how important her caregiver was, not just during this critical health episode, but in caring for her everyday needs. The client wanted us to share this story with as many people as possible because she recognizes how limited budget resources are but that the resources are critically-necessary for this vulnerable population in our County.

Joe Valentine, Director

Taxi Referral Program – Wheels for Meals

EHSD recently launched 2 new programs funded with “American Recovery and Reinvestment Act” TANF Emergency Contingency Funds: the “Taxi Referral Program and the “Food Boxes Voucher Program”. These programs provide services to needy families with gross income under 200% of the Federal Poverty Level.

The Taxi Referral Program can help fund up to 20 one-way rides for eligible individuals to appointments that will assist them with their employability plan; e.g., employment interviews. The Food Boxes Voucher Program will provide 30 nonperishable food items and will be distributed to eligible families at designated Food Bank locations and our Head Start sites throughout Contra Costa County.

If your organization is working with individuals who qualify for this service, please make sure they know about this program. For additional information, please contact Joel Flamand at 925-313-1735 or e-mail him: [Joel Flamand](mailto:Joel.Flamand).

Week of the Young Child

On April 13th, the Board of Supervisors declared April 11th – 17th the Week of the Young Child in Contra Costa County in honor of all the people committed to shaping the lives of young children and providing opportunities to their families.

This is an annual celebration sponsored by the National Association for the Education of Young Children and is actively supported by our Community Services Bureau in its Child Development/Head Start Centers. It aims to encourage all citizens to take an active role in addressing the needs of young children and their families through various programs and services.

The CSB child development centers planned activities around this year’s theme of “Early Years

Are Learning Years.” Parents, staff and elected officials were invited to read to the children as part of the “Reading is Fundamental” program.

Brochures and banners were also distributed to the community. The children participated in activities such as face painting, puppet making, and carnival games. Cultural Awareness Day, Crazy Dress-Up Day and Spring Festival were also part of the celebration.



Community Services Bureau Managers, teachers, Head Start parent and Supervisor John Gioia commemorate Week of the Young Child.

Independent Living Skills Program

Just a reminder: Mark your calendar now for a multi-media concert experience benefiting EHSD’s ILS Program, which offers teaching, training, counseling and mentoring to foster youth as they begin and move through their transition to successful adulthood.

The event will be Sunday, May 23rd, at 7 p.m. at Hope Center Covenant Church, 2275 Morella Avenue in Pleasant Hill. Tickets are \$8 in advance or \$10 at the door. Online tickets can be purchased at ITICKETS.com. For more information, call 925-953-8273 or e-mail your request to mailto:mwitwlool@att.

We continue to invite your comments; just [click here](#).

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Joe Valentine, Director

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