

## JUNE 2010 E-NEWSLETTER

### From the Director

Last month, the Governor released his May Revision to the 2010-2011 budget. Gone was the list of draconian “trigger” cuts, replaced by a new list of equally draconian cuts. Once again we see a strategy that argues that the State can no longer afford to provide even a basic safety net for the most vulnerable. Both the Assembly and Senate have rejected most of these proposals, and the Budget Conference Committee is currently working on developing a less drastic solution. However, as in past years, the final budget negotiations could move back towards the Administration’s position, so I think it’s important to spell out clearly what the impacts would be if the Governor’s proposals were accepted. Here are some of the more drastic proposals:

- *Elimination of CalWORKS:* the total elimination of CalWORKS would remove cash support for over 10,700 families including over 18,000 children. These families in turn would have no option other than to turn to county funded General Assistance, a program already at the breaking point as a result of the impacts of high unemployment. Over 30 million in state and federal dollars for CalWORKS assistance payments would be lost from the local economy.
- *Reductions in Child Care support for CalWORKS and working families:* the proposals to reduce or eliminate child care support would take several forms: rate reimbursement reductions, reducing the family income limit, reducing funding for “Stage 3” child care for CalWORKS families, eliminating “Stage 2 child care,” and eliminating all state funding for need-based child care, all impacting thousands of families and providers in Contra Costa County.
- *Reducing costs in the In Home Supportive Services [IHSS] Program by \$637 million [about \$7.8 million in Contra Costa]:* proposes to establish a “stakeholder group” to come up with a plan for the savings. The dollar amount being proposed

is equivalent to about 47% of the IHSS caseload – in Contra Costa over 3,500 frail seniors and disabled adults would lose services.

- *Food Stamps:* increase the counties’ share of costs for Food Stamps to 81% - an impact on Contra Costa of \$8.7 million.
- *Medi-Cal:* reduce funding to cover caseload growth – this will result in a decrease in Contra Costa’s Medi-Cal allocation of \$2.7 million resulting in a reduction in the number of positions needed to process Medi-Cal applications in a timely manner.
- *Child Welfare:* continue the Governor’s veto cut of \$80 million in the current budget year. Last year, Contra Costa had to eliminate 119 child welfare positions. Continuation of the Governor’s veto cut means we will continue to operate with an inadequate number of staff to respond to child abuse referrals in a timely manner or spend sufficient time working with children in foster care and their families.
- *Mental Health Realignment and Increased County Share of Cost for Child Welfare Service:* proposes to redirect funding from Mental Health Realignment to the County Child Welfare Allocation while at the same time increasing the County share of cost for Child Welfare Services from 20% to 80%. Both mental health and child welfare services will suffer as a result.
- *Elimination of grants for non-citizen legal immigrants:* 235 frail and disabled legal immigrants would lose support and be required to turn to county General Assistance for aid, which represents yet one more cost shift to the counties.

These are only some of the more drastic reductions being proposed. If even a portion of these come to pass, the impact on both people and counties will be profound. The argument that the State can no longer afford to provide a safety net for the most vulnerable needs to be turned around: given these types of impacts, we cannot afford not to continue to provide support to the most vulnerable.

Joe Valentine, EHSD Director

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### **Take a Foster Youth to the Capitol A Youth's Perspective**

“Take a Foster Youth to the Capitol” was a rather historical experience for many current and former foster youth; and there should be more of its kind in time to come. Our petition to restore the \$80,000,000 cut was recognized and the voices of foster youth were definitely heard as were the same issues addressed for current caregivers. I attended as a representative of the California Youth Connection; and earlier that morning I shadowed Senator Mark DeSaulnier, of the 7th district, whom I was extremely humbled by. We shared our personal stories and discussed common interests regarding foster youth and the economic barriers that arise. I was impressed with the legislator’s dedication to Contra Costa County children and family issues as I am both a constituent and a Student Worker through the county’s Children & Family services. During our scheduled lunch gathering with other foster youth and senators, youth were given the floor to introduce ourselves and speak on behalf of our unfortunate population. I raised the issue of the lack of resources available as it relates to post-secondary education for emancipated foster youth. Senator DeSaulnier complimented my communication skills! I was honored! He also took me on a tour of the capitol and the site is absolutely fascinating! He was sure to point out the historical symbolism in the architecture itself. Overall, the event was an awesome opportunity to make connections and raise awareness about the nearly impossible transitions out of the foster care system and the necessity for all of the many supportive services (i.e. transitional housing programs and other community based organizations) that were once availed to us at their maximum capacity.

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### **Older Americans Month and Senior Volunteer Month**

May was Older Americans Month and Senior Volunteer Month. The Board of Supervisors honored Contra Costa’s volunteers on May 25<sup>th</sup> and presented them with a resolution recognizing the event. Pictured below are members of EHSD’s Senior Volunteer corps receiving the Board’s resolution on May 25, 2010.



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### **EHSD's New Website**

EHSD recently transitioned its internet website to a new platform that is consistent with more features available through the County’s website. The former site, [www.ehsd.org](http://www.ehsd.org) will now transfer you to [www.cccounty.us/ehsd](http://www.cccounty.us/ehsd). It is our hope that this new site will provide easier access to information about the many services provided by EHSD. And, as always, we invite your comments on how we can improve the website or your general comments on EHSD and/or this E-Newsletter: just [click here](#).

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