

NOVEMBER 2010 E-NEWSLETTER

From the Director

"The pen is mightier than the sword" was an adage first coined by a 19th century English playwright. Its truth was demonstrated once again by the Governor's signing of the 2010-2011 state budget. With a stroke of his pen, he decimated child care funding for working families, continued to put thousands of abused and neglected children at risk, and froze county funding for Medi-Cal eligibility services in spite of the dramatic growth in caseloads. The legislature had worked hard to craft a bi-partisan budget that tried to provide some semblance of a reasonable balance between cuts and revenue. With a stroke of his pen, the Governor undid this work in pursuit of a larger "rainy day" fund. Once again, children are the big losers. Here are some of the most significant impacts on Contra Costa County:

- **Elimination of "Stage 3 Child Care" for working families** - 1,700 Contra Costa children will lose child care in November
- **A cut of \$80 million in Child Welfare services** [\$133 million total with loss of federal funds] - equivalent to 4 social workers and/or funding for community based services.
- **A cut of \$22 million in Medi-Cal Eligibility Services** - will result in a loss of about \$2 million to support Medi-Cal eligibility services.

At a Town Hall meeting hosted by Senator DeSaulnier on October 29 about the loss of Stage 3 Child Care funding, a chamber packed full of parents who would be affected by the cuts brought home the painful reality of what the veto means. Parents who had worked hard to get off welfare and become employed are now faced with the painful choice of quitting their jobs or leaving their children in unsupervised or sub-standard child care arrangements. Some had even been able to purchase homes and now will lose those as well. The visibly moved Senator vowed to push the legislature to act swiftly to restore the lost funding but the next session doesn't begin until December.

A temporary court injunction has extended implementation of the cut, and the Contra Costa First Five Commission voted to approve "bridge funding" that would at least cover child care for children aged 0-5. That still leaves over 900 school-age children without care if the court injunction is not extended. Our Department is working with the two local Stage 3 Administrators - the Child Care Council and PACEAPP - to develop an expedited process to help CalWORKS eligible parents immediately transition to Stage 2 Child Care in order to minimize any disruptions in care arrangements.

It's unfortunate that we have to do so much to protect children from the damage caused by the current Administration's policies. A new report by the Urban Institute on how to reduce poverty and economic distress in the post-federal stimulus era, identified investments in early childhood programs as one of the key long term strategies. Years of research have consistently identified lack of child care as one of the major barriers to families moving out of poverty. Drastic reductions in child care for working families simply make no sense from either a policy standpoint or a fiscal standpoint. Without any external intervention to undo the damage the Governor's decision will create, thousands more children would be left in substandard care, exposing them to abuse and neglect; and there will be far fewer social workers to follow up and investigate the complaints as a result of the Governor's child welfare veto. Dr. Lilian Katz, a renowned expert in the field of early childhood education, recently visited our Head Start program and provided the admonition that *"We must come to see that the well-being of our own children is intimately linked to the well-being of all other people's children. After all, when one of our own children needs life-saving surgery, someone else's child will perform it, when one of our own children is threatened or harmed by violence on the streets, someone else's child will inflict it. The good life for your own children can only be secured if it is also secured for all other people's children"*.

Joe Valentine, Director

Unfortunately, the Governor's veto of critically needed services for children ignores this basic truth.

Joe Valentine, EHSD Director

ACCESS CalWIN Debuts December 1

ACCESS CalWIN stands for Automated CalWIN Client Entry to Social Services and will be available December 1, 2010. ACCESS CalWIN allows clients to access or request a variety of information about their case by a toll-free telephone number 24/7/365. Examples of information available through ACCESS CalWIN include:

- general information for office locations, phone numbers to report child or adult abuse, fraud, appeals
- case-specific information for Child Welfare, Food Stamps, MediCal, and General Assistance programs
- how to get replacement of BIC (Beneficiary Identification Card) or EBT (electronic benefit transfer) cards
- income verification
- monthly or quarterly reports

Case and client-specific information is protected by security. Dialing the toll-free number will first connect callers to an auto attendant, but callers will have the option of speaking with a live person during regular business hours. During non-business hours, callers will have an option to leave a message for workers from a select list of options. Information will be available in English, Spanish, and Cantonese and Vietnamese (Vietnamese and Farsi will be added in the near future).

EHSD is excited about having the ability to offer this additional resource to clients to expedite getting information about their cases. A flyer will be sent to all our subscribers on December 1 - watch for it!

Early Learning Mentor Coaches Grant

Our Community Services Bureau (CSB) is thrilled to have received the ARRA Early Learning Mentor

Joe Valentine, Director

40 Douglas Dr., Martinez, CA 94553 ★ Phone: (925) 313-1579 ★ Fax: (925) 313-1575 ★ [Contact Us](#)

Coaches grant. The focus of this mentoring program is to build capacity among existing staff to grow in-house mentor coaches. Utilizing the Protégé Project, a framework developed by Mary Nolan, PhD., CSB will hire four mentor coaches on a contractual basis to work with 12 selected protégés with the intent to build a strong mentoring program. Upon completion of this initiative, the program will have in-house capacity to continue to develop more mentors throughout the years. The protégés will be selected from the three distinct geographical regions of the county as well as delegate and partner agencies. The intent is to form four clusters with a mentor coach assigned to each one. Staff, children and families throughout the organization will benefit from the work of the mentor coaches and protégés as they seek to enhance the quality of the program. Evaluation of the initiative will utilize self-reports, ratings by others, and direct observations. All of this information and training will be shared with our local child care community so that the ARRA funding is serving many more staff and children than in the Head Start program alone.

1st Annual Walk for Fall Prevention

The 1st Annual Walk for Prevention was a resounding success! All ages and abilities participated.



Look close: that's Captain "Sully" Sullenberger standing in the right portion of the photo (tall man in the dark shirt). His wife, Joanie, led the group in warm-up exercises before the walk.