



Region 8 Update

2014 Holiday All Staff Meeting

It was a beautiful and sunny day outside, while music was playing inside to welcome DSHS staff to the Country Holiday themed annual all staff meeting and luncheon held on December 10, 2014 in the Regina room of the Columbus Italian Society in San Antonio. The tables were festively set with holiday candy filled mason jars and yule logs created by committee members: Bridget Wahler, Connie Alaniz, D'Angela Harder, Denise Kleiber, Gale Morrow, Jessica Deerin, Lillian Ringsdorf, Nicole Henry, Norma Garza, Pamela Gomez, Rose Falcon & Velma Stille. 116 staff from across Region 8 attended the staff meeting where we all learned the dangers of Distracted Driving from Law Enforcement Liaison Robert Hanson and What to Say and How to Say It from the hilarious Sid Hurlbert. Sid reminded us to choose a better attitude every day and reminded us to laugh and have fun.

After the meeting, 95 staff stayed for the brisket and turkey lunch provided by Grady's Barbeque as well as the antics of the remaining afternoon. Nicole Henry coordinated a game of Human Bingo whose top 3 winners were Beth Hannemann, Linda Ruiz and Ester Dimas. We cheered 16 staff members who celebrated the receipt of awards for 5 to 30 years of State service. Hilarity ensued as Dr. Matt Williams emceed the White Elephant gift exchange and gift items were traded back and forth. This year saw Dr. Ringsdorf as the first recipient of the Lydon Spam award for most unique/ugly/useless gift (in honor of Bill Lydon who contributed a can of Spam during a previous year's gift exchange). The gift she contributed to the game was a bottle drinking pirate piece which was heatedly traded and ultimately won by Steve Hannemann. Attendees used ballots to vote for their favorite photos in the categories of Regional Places and Public Health, see last page for list of winners and photos. Mark Mullings, who ironically never eats candy, took home an oversized jar of holiday candy by having the nearest estimate of the quantity inside. D'Angela Harder won the Best Decorated Employee Contest for her brilliant Duck Dynasty inspired outfit. The final game had everyone turning over their chairs to find the candy cane which designated the person at the table who would take home the table centerpiece.



Handmade decorations



Velma Stille & D'Angela Harder sign staff in



Arnold Martinez & Stacy Hull pick up their badges



Dr. Ringsdorf awards D'Angela "Best Decorated Employee"



Mark Mullings won Candy Jar Guessing Game

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Smiles were on everyone's faces as they walked out into the afternoon sunshine with their holiday goodies and memories of another fun filled holiday DSHS staff meeting.



Dr. Matt Williams presents Dr. Ringsdorf with 1st Annual Lydon Spam Award



We learned the dangers of Distracted Driving from Mr. Robert Hanson

Region 8 Update

Region 8 Staff Give Back to the Community



**“No one is
useless in this
world who
lightens the
burdens of
another.”**

**— Charles
Dickens**

For the last several years, Region 8 employees have supported families in need by donating holiday toys for children and Thanksgiving meals for families served by our Specialized Health and Social Services program. The primary coordinator for the Thanksgiving Meals project was Diane Herrera in partnership with Yvonne Henderson. Many Region 8 staff chipped in and we raised \$560 for the meals. In 2014, we were able to distribute 18 holiday meals, including

- 10 to 14 lb. turkey
- 1 Roasting pan
- 2 boxes of dressing
- 2 cans of green beans
- 2 cans of cream of mushroom soup
- 1 can of French onions
- 1 box of instant mashed potatoes
- 1 package of rolls
- 1 jar of gravy
- 1 can of cranberry sauce
- 1 bag of apples and oranges



Through the Angel Tree project, coordinated by Ester Dimas, we collected toys for 74 children from 26 families. The first year of the Angel Tree, Region 8 collected and distributed toys for 25 children in 8 families. Your generosity has grown significantly since the project started in 2009.

From the Wellness Committee

CONGRATULATIONS to Sheila Jansky from our Hallettsville office on winning the 2014 Maintain No Gain cash prize!!

Sheila lost more than 2 pounds over the holidays and increased her chances of winning the cash prize drawing by submitting a weekly log. Participating in Maintain No Gain, “really makes me realize what I need to improve on especially my eating habits,” commented Sheila.

Twenty-six staff registered and paid \$3 to participate. The program asked participants to increase, or at least maintain, and record physical activity and fruit/vegetable consumption over the 8 weeks that include the Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays. Participants were eligible for the cash prize drawing if they gained no more than 2 pounds. Fourteen staff completed the 8 weeks and returned for an exit weigh-in. All 14 were eligible for the drawing of \$79. They lost a total of 61.4 pounds and an average of 4.4 pounds. The typical person gains 2 pounds during this same period. Congratulations on a job well-done!

Money raised from the January 15 chili cook off will be used to fund a resource library and other Activ8! initiatives.

PS. Don't forget to join the Activ8! Team when you sign up for the State's Get Fit Challenge!



2014 Photo Contest Winners

A regular Region 8 event is our annual photography contest. A call for photos was issued in the 2014 August Newsletter for photos in two categories; Region 8 Places and Region 8 Public Health. 20 semi-finalists were chosen from over 60 entries by staff who participated in our online voting. At the December all staff meeting the finalist's photos were placed on the tables and staff voted via entry tickets for their favorites in each category. The top 10 photos in each category, a few of which are pictured, will be framed and displayed in the main hallway at 7430 Louis Pasteur. Thank you to all those who participated by either submitting a photo or voting. (More winners on last page.)



1st Place
Connie Alaniz
Butterfly



2nd Place (tie)
Magdalena Trujillo
Ocean View



2nd Place (tie)
Bryce Holton
Orange Sunset



2nd Place (tie)
Laurie Henefey
Sunflower



3rd Place
Kirk Loften
Blooming Sage

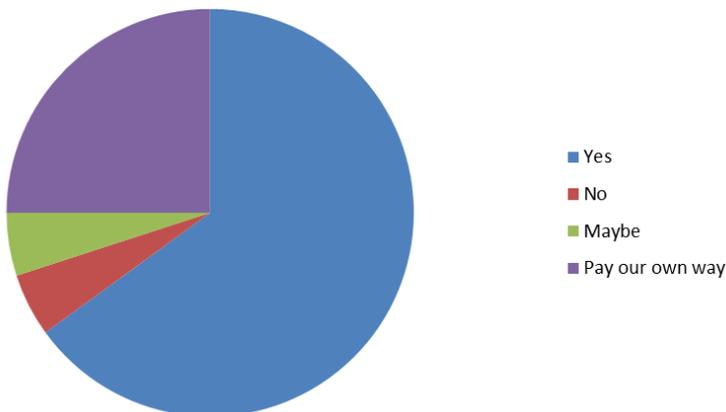
Should We Raise Funds to Support the December All Staff Luncheon?

In 2009, Region 8 began hosting an all staff meeting in December. As an opportunity for learning and team building, we have held the meeting at TCID, at the San Antonio Food Bank, and for the last few years at the Christopher Columbus Society ballroom. What started as a pot luck has now become a catered meal. Costs for the 2014 luncheon were \$1200.00. Those who attended the luncheon in 2014 paid \$11.00 per person for the meal. We raised the rest of the money through small fund raising events including sales of popcorn, paletas, fruit and other items.

To find out what the general opinion on this issue is, we distributed a SurveyMonkey questionnaire. This is what we learned.

Sixty-five percent of you say yes, we should raise funds to support the cost of the luncheon. A few disagreed. Twenty-five percent of you feel that we should each pay our own way. Some of you commented that you would like a different menu or that only those who participate in the fund raisers should benefit from their proceeds.

Should We Raise Funds?



When asked what fund raisers you would support, you liked the idea of popcorn, taco or bake sales. You also liked the idea of paying to wear jeans at the rate of \$1 per day. You were not interested in buying a Region 8 cook book or a calendar of the photo contest winners. Some of you asked questions about how field office staff could participate.

We are going to give fundraising a try. Connie Alaniz and Rose Falcon have agreed to lead a group of regional volunteers in this effort. Those of you who volunteered on the survey will soon hear from Connie and Rose about setting up a meeting to start planning for the December 2015 All Staff Luncheon. Thanks for your input.

CONGRATULATIONS TO REGION 8'S NEW COMMUNITY HEALTH WORKERS!

In 2014, nine Region 8 employees from the Family and Community Health and Border Health programs successfully applied to become certified Community Health Workers (CHWs). Community Health Workers, often referred to in Texas by the Spanish term *promotoras de salud*, are trusted members of the community. They are people who understand the language, culture and life experiences of the communities they serve. Their role is to increase health knowledge and improve health behaviors of the people where they work.

To become a certified Community Health Worker in Texas requires Texas residency and completion of an approved 160-hour competency-based Community Health Worker training program certified by DSHS. A candidate may also be certified based on experience. To apply, a candidate submits an application documenting 1000 hours of community health work within the most recent six years. This work experience is verified by the CHW Certification Program staff.

After working as a laboratory technician, testing poultry for *Escherichia coli* (abbreviated as E. coli) and *Salmonella* infections, **Amanda White** came to work in the Seguin field office in 2012. She focuses on Scrubby Bear hand washing presentations for youngsters and promoting Safe Sleep and Text4Baby for new and expecting moms. Amanda says, "I think being a CHW shows how important it is to help the community."

Desiree Evans has worked in the Karnes City field office since 2013. She used to work at the Texas Department of Criminal Justice where she provided administrative support. She is a certified Child Passenger Safety Technician and teaches parents how to correctly install and use child safety seats to protect children in vehicles.

In Pearsall, **Stephanie Del Toro** is promoting Safe Sleep. Babies who are put to sleep on their backs are less likely to suffer from sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS). She also works to reduce bullying and prevent suicide. Stephanie is a medical assistant who previously worked in a rural health clinic.

Rosy de los Santos says, "My CHW certification has made me more in tune with the needs of the community. There is a sense of pride that comes from being a promotora and wanting those in my community to be healthy so that they may have a better quality of life." After working for the Texas Office of the Attorney General and then as a Texas Works Advisor for HHSC, Rosy now works in the DSHS Eagle Pass Office of Border Health. Her program activities include obesity prevention and physical activity. Specifically she trains fifth grade students to be Nutrition Ambassadors who promote better eating habits at school. In the 100 Mile Clubs, she encourages children to increase their physical activity by riding bicycles or walking to school.

In 2013, **Sandra Calvillo** left Toyota Motor Manufacturing, where she worked as a team leader in charge of two inspection lines, and came to work for Region 8. She also had experience as a caseworker for Texas Works. As a CHW in Floresville who is also a Child Passenger Safety Technician, she teaches parents about the correct use of child safety seats. "Knowing you saved a child's life by protecting them in a vehicle is what I want to continue to do in the counties I serve." In her role as a CHW, Sandra works with community coalitions to identify needs and respond to them.

Before coming to DSHS, **Sheila Jansky** worked for the Texas Animal Health Commission. As a CHW, she works with Texas AgriLife Extension and the Texas Department of Transportation to promote child passenger safety. She is able build relationships with other agencies and groups in order to identify community needs, find resources and provide services.

Alma Lovett has been working for DSHS since 1999. She started as a Volunteer in Service to America (VISTA) worker before becoming a state employee. Although she became a certified CHW only recently, this is the work she has been doing in her 16 year tenure with Region 8. One of her activities is working with the Bandera Food Council, a group of volunteers and organizations that work together to assure the availability of food bank locations throughout Bandera County.

Retired for two years before she came to work for Region 8, **Norma Cardona Price** started doing temp work for a company that sold baby chicks, ducks and other fowl. She started learning about diseases that affect poultry. Then she decided she wanted a job where she could make a difference and be more in touch with the community. As a CHW, Norma supports the Kerrville Child Fatality Review Team and promotes child car seat use.

Candy Camacho works in the Goliad field office. She came to work for Region 8 after being a stay-at-home mom with three children. One of the projects she works with is the *My Plate* program helping children and adults make healthy food choices.

Region 8 also has the capacity to train CHWs and provide continuing education credit. Office of Border Health program coordinator, **Elvia Ledezma**, currently serves as a Certified Instructor for Promotores/Community Health Workers. She completed the required 160-hour training program through *Día de la Mujer Latina*, Inc. in May of 2012. She has recently provided training on Indoor Triggers of Asthma and Community Mapping in Val Verde, Maverick and Bexar counties. Her certification allows her to provide continuing education to CHWs, instruct individuals who want to become certified, and help ensure consistent and accurate public health messages.

2014 Photo Contest - Places Winners (cont.)



4th Place
Jessica Everett
San Fernando Cathedral



5th Place (tie)
Linda Garcez
E. Houston St.



5th Place (tie)
Matthew Whitson
Border Crossing



5th Place (tie)
Glenda Garcia
Quemado Longhorn



5th Place (tie)
Linda Garcez
Avenida Guadalupe

2014 Photo Contest - Public Health Winners



1st Place
Rose Falcon
Sign of the Times



2nd Place
Laura Rios
Welcome DSHS



3rd Place (tie)
Kirk Lofton
Reflective Vests



3rd Place (tie)
Jessica Everett
Fallout Shelter



4th Place
Velma Stille
Kickapoo Traditional Tribe of Texas



5th Place
Kirk Lofton
St. Mary's Reinbolt Abatement