

HIGHLIGHTS

November 2002

A Children & Youth Services Newsletter for Volunteers & Mentors of CYS-Project Together

Vol. XVII, No. 11

For Your Information...

An informal group of male mentors met recently at West Region Clinic to discuss mutual concerns of males involved in mentoring. The meeting, led by veteran CYS-Project Together Mentor Conrad Wilson, was a dynamic interaction that lasted two hours. It concluded with the consensus that they should meet again. Participants put forward many questions. These included, "What do I do if he sees me as a dad?" and "How do I respond to questions from others like, 'Why do you want to mentor a boy who is not yours?'" There was also discussion of boundaries and commitment. According to West Region CYS-Project Together Volunteer Coordinator Diane Prescott, "The individuals in the group were very supportive of each other. It gave them a chance to connect and talk about issues unique to male mentors. We plan to do this again soon." Any male mentors interested in participating may contact their CYS-Project Together Volunteer Coordinator...

Please mark your calendars for 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 15, the date for our third annual holiday party for CYS clients who are assigned mentors. The party is sponsored by the Elks Club in Huntington Beach. Coordinated by CYS-Project Together Mentor Nancy Bresnan, along with Valerie and Tom Lemm of the Elks Lodge, it is always an exciting and uplifting event for children and teenagers alike. Look for flyers in the mail...

According to the Health Care Agency's Safety Officer Sam Love, overloaded school backpacks can cause pain and strain for kids. Now that

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Therapist Spotlight—Shannon Crofts, MSW

Mentors Help Therapists Meet Treatment Goals

For some kids, ordering a hamburger on their own is a huge thing, according to Shannon Crofts, MSW, clinical therapist at Western Youth Services in Fountain Valley.

While many take the ability to do such a simple thing for granted, some children and teenagers in treatment simply have never had an opportunity to experience this type of self expression. Referring to her experience in working with four different CYS-Project Together mentors assigned to her clients, Shannon firmly believes that "A mentor is an important tool for therapists because he (or she) helps the therapeutic process by providing another perspective" (for both the therapist and the child). According to Shannon, "The most important thing that mentors do, is provide diversity of experience in the clients' lives."



The kids "start viewing themselves in the context of being a part of our society...then they begin to develop a sense of the future."

Shannon has observed the changes that have taken place in clients with assigned mentors from CYS-Project Together. "The mentors help the child develop skills in social interactions, especially with adults. This in itself helps the clients interact with me better as another adult in their lives. Many of the kids are literally out of practice of being around adults.

According to Shannon, "Most kids have teachers, coaches and friends of parents to serve as role models. In many of our cases, the friends of the parents are missing in their lives. The mentors let the kids know that they have options."

Mentors take them out and they become more self-sufficient, more confident about themselves in school and start viewing themselves in the context of being a part of our society. In the beginning, being able to order a hamburger is a huge thing. Then, they begin to develop a sense of the future," said Shannon. "The mentor brings to the process, a relationship, commitment and reliability," Shannon said.

Shannon is currently working with eight interns completing requirements for their master's in social work. She invited Diane Prescott, Volunteer Coordinator

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Highlights Calendar

The CYS-Project Together Calendar is a collection of affordable, fun, wholesome and interesting events that can be enjoyed by children, teens and adults. To submit an item for the calendar, please call (714)796-0100.

Saturday, Nov. 2 **Dia de Los Muertos** **(Day of the Dead)**

Fullerton Museum Center
Wilshire at Pomona Avenues
Fullerton
(714)738-6545

"Don't fear dying, fear not having lived." This is the theme of this wonderful Mexican celebration that honors your family and ancestors while celebrating life by creating folk art.

Time: 1-3 p.m.
Cost: \$8

Tuesdays, Nov. 5 & 12 **Terrific Tuesdays**

El Modena Library
380 S. Hewes St.
Orange
(714)288-2454

This is a children's story time for boys and girls in grades 1 through 5. The hour-long program includes folktales from around the world as well as games and crafts.

Time: 3:30 p.m.
Cost: Free

Saturday, Nov. 9 **Holiday Craft Faire**

Westminster Community Services
8200 Westminster Blvd.
Westminster
(714)895-2860

The city hosts this event every year and attracts those looking for handmade one-of-a-kind gifts.

Time: 9 a.m.-3 p.m.
Cost: Free

Nov. 11-Dec. 12 **After School Sports**

Community Services Department
Laguna Hills
(949)707-2692

The Community Services Department is offering intramural sports two days a week after school at each elementary

school campus. Sessions begin with skills development and progress to tournaments.

Time: After school
Cost: Free

Thursday, Nov. 14 **Art Walk**

Meet at Wells Fargo Bank
Orange Circle Plaza
Old Towne Orange
(714)538-3581

This is a full evening of enjoyment that begins at the Wells Fargo Bank building on Orange Circle Plaza in Old Towne Orange. Participants will not only have an opportunity to explore some wonderful art galleries and antique shops, but will also learn about historical sites marking the place Orange has in the history of the county.

Time: 6-9 p.m.
Cost: Free

Therapist Spotlight—Shannon Crotts, MSW

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with West Region Clinic, to do a presentation about the CYS-Project Together program so the interns would know about it as a resource for clients. Shannon is particularly interested in helping them to understand the supportive role the mentor plays by working closely with both the therapist and the child, according to Diane.

Shannon is so enthusiastic about the CYS-Project Together program that she would like to become a mentor herself. She feels that the time devoted to such an activity is valuable because the child becomes happier and more emotionally adjusted as the relationship with the mentor develops.

Shannon also utilizes other CYS-Project Together services, including opportunities for clients to attend Camp Titan, participate in sports, receive school backpacks for clients in need and access the Resource Center for food and clothing.

A therapist at Western Youth Services for two years, Shannon is "a natural" at social work. When she was in school at California State University, Long Beach, she served as the resident assistant of a dormitory.

"I loved it," said Shannon. "I would make new people feel welcome and help keep the peace, but most of all, I was a part of the university community. I was involved in a meaningful way."

This experience was augmented by a relationship with a person she

considered to be her mentor, Arlene Perez, a social worker with Long Beach Unified School District. Shannon completed an undergraduate and graduate internship under Arlene. It was Arlene's work with the children that inspired Shannon to complete her MSW and enter into clinical work.

"I thought social work would not be so uplifting, but Arlene was dynamic, outgoing and took positive action," said Shannon. As a result, Shannon noted that she was creating constructive change for the children. "She steered me in this direction and now I love working in a clinical setting," said Shannon.

"How do I feel about working with mentors? Everyone gets something out of it. Mentors make strides in their personal growth, the kids experience positive change and I have the personal satisfaction that I'm able to meet treatment goals. All of this makes my job easier," said Shannon.

Volunteer Coordinator Diane, who works often with Shannon, is thankful for her constant support of CYS-Project Together as well as the genuine kindness she provides to clients and mentors who work with her.

"She is always available whenever you need to speak with her," according to Diane.

—Thank you to Diane Prescott, CYS-Project Together Volunteer Coordinator for West Region, who contributed the information for this article.

Mentoring Matters

WELCOME NEW MENTORS

East North	Maria Aldana Angelica Quintero Kevin Su
South/ Costa Mesa	Jennifer Guran
South/ Laguna	Joleen Aguon Ernesto Puchades
West	Wendy Callahan
Aspen/ Santa Ana	Stacey Callori Oscar Gonzales Candice Stanton

THANKS TO THOSE WHO HAVE MOVED ON

East	Melody St. John
South/ Costa Mesa	Diem Chau "Amy" Huynh
South/ Laguna Beach	Patty Lutz Richard Suarez Michael Sweeney
West	Diana Albrucato Andre Sanz
Aspen/ Santa Ana	Patti Chen Daniele Grisby

There's More Than One Way to Hug a Child...

The staff and clients of Children & Youth Services (CYS) and CYS-Project Together deeply appreciate the wonderful support provided by many local businesses and organizations. Our affiliation with the Mental Health Association of Orange County allows us to accept and distribute community resources that are an important asset in the therapeutic process for all the children we serve.

Pauline Bartley Placentia	Frazee Paints San Diego
Irene Chisholm Ontario	Monica Guevara Placentia

Volunteers Are Special!

Mentor Teaches Boy About Adventure

Sean Liu, CYS-Project Together mentor, was able to make a connection with a boy, who was suffering from low self-esteem and feelings of rejection, and help him see the world from a different point of view.

An energetic young man, who has just completed the fire science course to become a fire fighter, Sean has been instrumental in helping this Children and Youth Services client find a sense of security. The two actively participate in life adventures. Their time together helps him understand a complex world made up of many cultures and dimensions.

Sean encouraged the boy's participation in a variety of activities, ranging from sports to exploring the local library. The two often go bike riding and play ball at local parks. This has not only expanded the child's interests, but has boosted his enthusiasm and sense of adventure. This in turn has enhanced his self-esteem.

Because the child is relating well to Sean as a positive male role model and is included in Sean's activities, he is better able to cope with his feelings. He is developing skills to help him be included in activities with his peers. Sean also treats the boy with high regard and provides excellent support by allowing him to make his own decisions and reminding him that there are negative consequences for bad decisions. He helps motivate him to set goals.

Sean is Chinese and has first hand bicultural and bilingual experience of living in two diverse cultures. The child he mentors is Hispanic. As a Mentor, Sean has exercised exceptional cultural sensitivity. He makes their outings together totally "American" experiences. But he also takes the time to share and discuss cultural likenesses and differences in approach and action to create understanding. He makes sure the child feels comfortable and is always respectful of the wishes of his grandmother, who is also his caregiver.

The youngster's therapist remarked that the boy is very fond of Sean and listens to him. "I think he has found a positive role model," she said.

According to Veronica Chavez, East Region CYS-Project Together Volunteer Coordinator, "We thank Sean for being a part of our program and guiding this youngster toward a more assured future. His tolerance and exceptional cultural sensitivity have gone a long way."

—Thank you to Veronica Chavez, CYS-Project Together Volunteer Coordinator for East Region, who provided information for this article.

For Your Information...

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we are well into the school year, it's a good time to check how backpack habits have affected the kids so far. Make sure the child's pack has padded shoulder pads to prevent pain and tingling in the neck, arms and hands. Is the child leaning to one side? This can be caused by slinging the pack over one shoulder. The correct way to carry a pack is with straps over both shoulders, heavier items placed in the pack closest to the child's back, and the pack should go no further than 4 inches below the waist. Now it's time to weigh the pack that the child actually carries and then weigh the child. Never allow a child to carry more than 15 percent of his body weight in the pack...

The Back Page



Preparing for the Holiday Mood

Santa's elves made a stash of fabulous items for this year's *CYS-Project Together Annual Holiday BouTEAque* slated for 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Thursday, Nov. 21, in the Fourth Floor Conference Room at 405 W. 5th St., Santa Ana. The *BouTEAque* promises to be the best yet. Handcrafted holiday items that can be personalized, the original *CYS-Project Together* cookbook, "Sweet, Savory & Sassy" and homemade holiday refreshments will be featured. All proceeds benefit clients and families served by BHS/Children & Youth Services.



County of Orange Health Care Agency
Behavioral Health Services/Children & Youth Services

CYS-Project Together Highlights

405 W. 5th Street, Suite 436
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Address Correction Requested

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The Health Care Agency/Behavioral Health Services/Children and Youth Services provides mental health treatment for emotionally and behaviorally disturbed youth and their families throughout Orange County. *CYS-Project Together* is a volunteer mentor program for *CYS* children and teens. The program also offers supportive resources to clients and families to assist them in achieving treatment goals. The program operates cooperatively with its community partner, the Mental Health Association of Orange County.

