

RCP

QUARTERLY

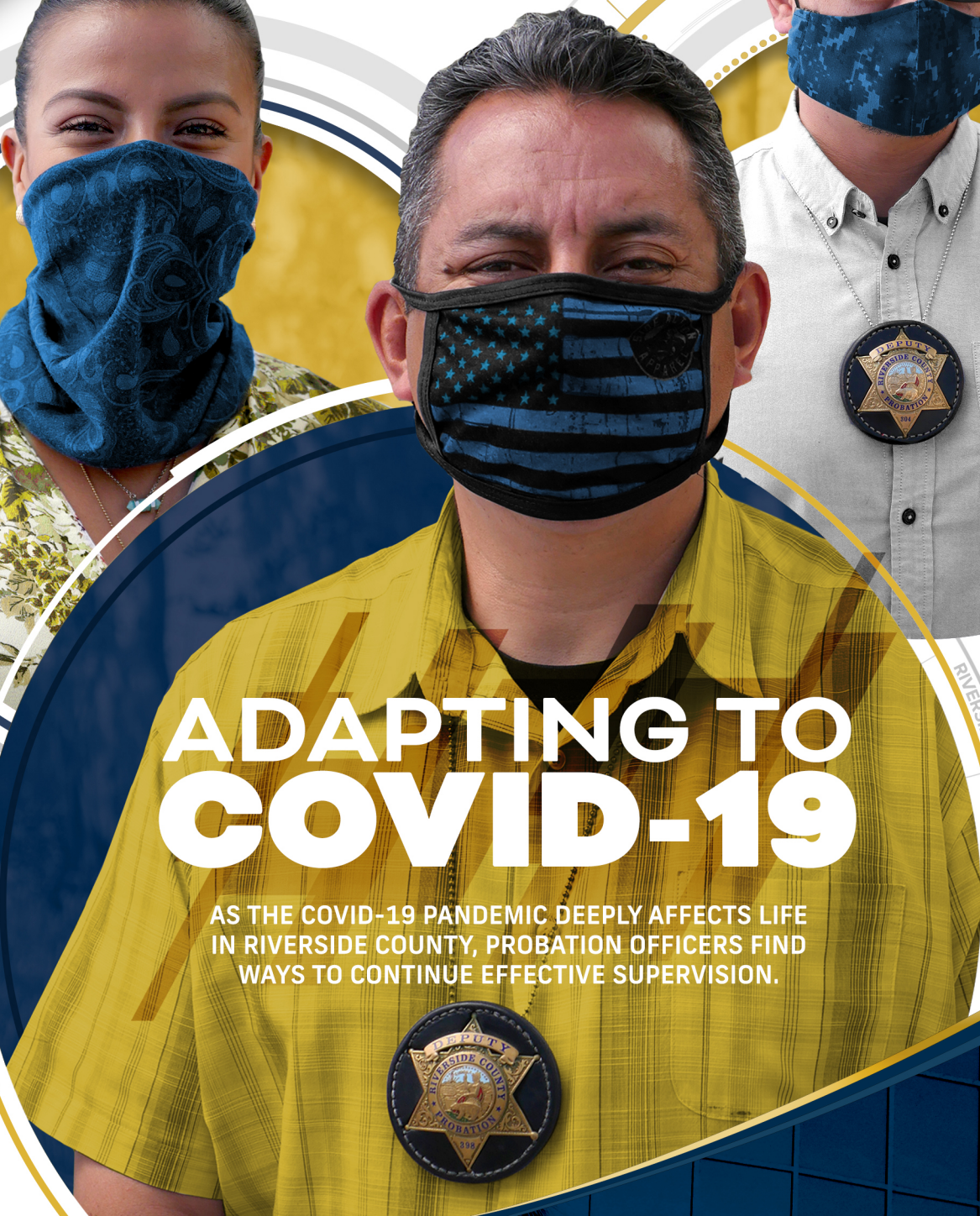
VOLUME VI
ISSUE II

COVID-19

A PUBLICATION OF
RIVERSIDE COUNTY
PROBATION
DEPARTMENT



FLATTEN THE CURVE



ADAPTING TO COVID-19

AS THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC DEEPLY AFFECTS LIFE
IN RIVERSIDE COUNTY, PROBATION OFFICERS FIND
WAYS TO CONTINUE EFFECTIVE SUPERVISION.

STAY-AT-HOME
EXECUTIVE ORDER N-33-20

ESSENTIAL SERVICES
PUBLIC SAFETY

RIVERSIDE COUNTY



MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF



I WANT TO ACKNOWLEDGE AND THANK EVERY MEMBER OF THIS DEPARTMENT FOR YOUR EFFORTS DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC. IT HAS TRULY BEEN AN UNPRECEDENTED EVENT. YOUR ATTENTION TO UNIVERSAL PRECAUTIONS AND BEST PRACTICES OVER THE LAST FEW MONTHS HAS REDUCED THE SPREAD OF THIS ILLNESS WITHIN OUR OWN RANKS. WELL DONE. AS OF THIS WRITING, THERE IS MUCH UNKNOWN AHEAD. WE DO NOT KNOW WHEN BUSINESS WILL RETURN TO NORMAL AND WE DO NOT YET KNOW THE IMPACT TO THE ECONOMY. WE DO KNOW THAT WE ARE BOUND TO OUR MISSION, "SERVING COURTS, PROTECTING OUR COMMUNITY, CHANGING LIVES." THIS GUIDES OUR OPERATIONS AND ACTIVITIES. OUR VALUES ZERO US IN ON HOW WE WILL DO THAT; WITH EXCELLENCE, WITH INTEGRITY AND WITH DEDICATION. WE WILL CONTINUE TO ADAPT AS THE LANDSCAPE CHANGES AROUND US. WE WILL SEEK OPPORTUNITIES TO BETTER ALIGN OUR WORK WITH OUR MISSION. ULTIMATELY, WE ARE IN THE PEOPLE BUSINESS AND OUR BUSINESS IS HELPING OTHERS TO FIND THE RIGHT PATH OR TO GET BACK TO THE RIGHT PATH. THIS IS CHALLENGING WORK. ESPECIALLY WHEN FACED WITH SOMEONE WHO IS NOT YET READY FOR CHANGE. I AM GRATEFUL FOR ALL THAT YOU DO AND YOUR WILLINGNESS TO "GO BACK AT IT" EVERY DAY. OUR DEPARTMENT STAFF PROVIDED A NUMBER OF COMMUNITY SERVICE ACTS DURING THIS PANDEMIC. THAT SPEAKS TO WHERE OUR HEARTS ARE. KEEP UP THE GREAT WORK. KEEP FOCUSED ON THE MISSION. AND KEEP MAKING A DIFFERENCE.



Ronald L. Miller II

RON L. MILLER II
CHIEF PROBATION OFFICER



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ADAPTING TO COVID-19

COVID-19 has deeply affected life for almost every human being. Residents of Riverside County have acutely felt the ramifications of the pandemic, from health and hygienic concerns to state-ordered shutdowns, county mandates and economic and financial setbacks.

The safety of our clients, in-custody youth and staff has been paramount, but we have not forgotten our mission. With jobs being put on hold or even lost, RCP has taken steps to elevate our service to our clients in need. Additionally, the department has leaned hard into taking public health seriously such as exploring telework options for staff so as to help flatten the curve of the COVID-19 pandemic.

This feature of RCP Quarterly focuses on the successes of our staff in adapting to these wide-reaching challenges with forward-thinking initiative and creativity.

ESSENTIAL SERVICES

PUBLIC SAFETY

COVID-19





KEEPING CONTACT

BY SENIOR PROBATION OFFICER ESTEBAN DE LOS REYES

Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, combating the spread of the disease has been a priority. In an effort to flatten the curve, a great deal has changed in how contact with our clients are made in the probation offices, the courts and in their homes. More than ever, technology is assisting probation officers in maintaining contact through video communication applications.

The Central Services Division, Moreno Valley AB-109 unit has been exploring the use of technology through video communication applications installed on our county-issued cellular telephones. Face-to-face contacts through Google Duo has been introduced and are successful in re-connecting with probation clients who have been affected by office closures and the stay-at-home order.

Participating probation officers have found our clients are receptive to participating in video conferences. Video communication promotes community safety by maintaining social distancing and minimizing risk to all from exposure to coronavirus. Probation officers are able to engage with the clients, verify residences and assess the validity of information received by evaluating body language and demeanor. Clients appear engaged and debrief issues and concerns with a probation officer they can see. Probation officers have also shared that clients are motivated to participate in video chat as it solves issues related to transportation and time for those living far from the probation office. This has been a wonderful tool that allows probation officers to continue engaging with clients and assess case plan goals.

Although we are still in the beginning stages of assessing this form of video communication, staff have already provided suggestions for improvement that can further assist us to effectively engage our clients through technology. As we adapt, technology continues to assist probation officers in changing lives by maintaining contact through video communication apps.



TELECOMMUTING

BY SENIOR PROBATION OFFICER QUAHARI BOBO

On March 4, 2020, Governor Gavin Newsom proclaimed a State of Emergency and issued a stay-at-home order as a result of the COVID-19 threat. Deemed essential workers, Riverside County Probation (RCP) maintained our commitment to the community while keeping safety a priority with social distancing and face coverings. Chief Miller and the Executive Team also facilitated a plan to assist in the distancing efforts by authorizing telecommuting.

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, approximately 24 percent of the workforce currently telecommutes at least part time. Studies show that remote workers tend to be more productive, efficient, submit higher-quality work, experience increased morale and stay with their employers longer. However, like many of you, I was apprehensive about working remotely due to my concerns about maintaining a balance between home and work.

After only a few weeks of working remotely, I'm surprisingly intrigued by my overall sense of productivity, serenity and eagerness for what the new day brings. While I love the social

environment that the workplace provides, telecommuting has proven to be productive amidst the absence of social interruptions. I find my creativity soaring. Colleagues throughout the RCP family have expressed the same sense of satisfaction.

Communication and accountability have continued, as supervisors and managers alike utilize email, text messages and electronic conferencing systems such as Zoom, Duo, WebEx and FaceTime to keep in contact with staff working from home. "We can't always do the same thing the same way, especially in times of crisis," Assistant Division Director Isha Jacks said. "We have to continue to be fluid and make the necessary changes with the times."

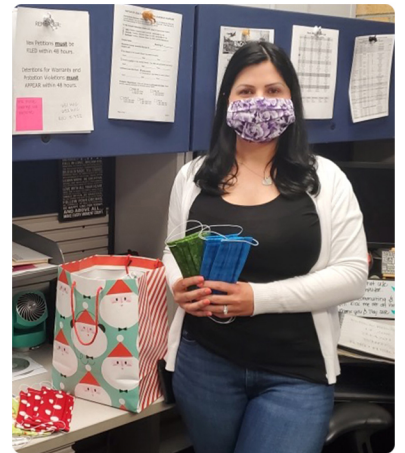
COVID-19 may have initially impacted RCP operations, but staff quickly overcame the challenges and continued to fulfill the department's commitment to our clients and the community.

MASK MAKER

BY SUPERVISING PROBATION OFFICER ASHLEY PARKER

During this unprecedented time, each RCP employee has been asked to do their job diligently, work outside of the box and be adaptable to a quickly changing environment. Senior Probation Officer Amanda Wheeler, from the Metro West Services Division (MWSD), has encompassed all these tasks. In March, when Governor Newsom ordered California residents to stay at home, she launched into action. She began to sew face masks for family and friends from leftover fabric she had at home. Two weeks later, Riverside County Health Officials mandated face covering for all essential employees. Knowing her coworkers would need face coverings, Amanda generously spent all weekend creating 103 face masks to ensure all MWSD employees had them for the following Monday. Every employee was able to select a face mask or two.

Seeing a need for RCP staff in the institutions, Amanda reached out to them to provide reusable/ washable face masks to each of their employees. She made additional masks with donated supplies and supplies she was able to obtain by standing in long lines at fabric stores on her days off. On April 19, she provided 72 face masks for Indio Juvenile Hall employees. She then quickly turned her attention to Southwest Juvenile Hall where she provided 125 face masks for their staff. In total, Amanda made and provided nearly 400 masks to the department, her friends and her family. During this time of uncertainty, Amanda exemplified compassion, teamwork and most of all her dedication to the department and to the safety and well-being of her colleagues. Thank you, Amanda, for your dedication and making a difference in the lives of others.

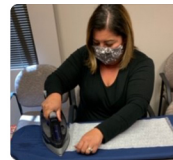
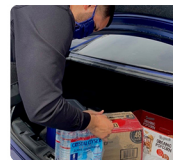
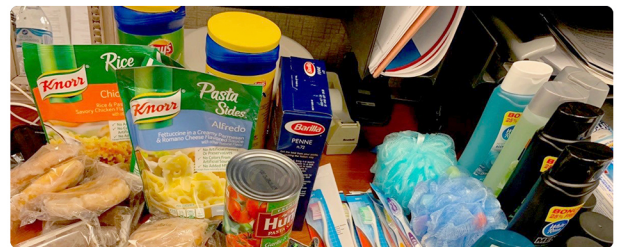


DESERT DONATION

BY SUPERVISING PROBATION OFFICERS LILJA WHITING AND LORIE NICHOLSON

The Desert Services Division (DSD) continues to serve its communities. On April 29, 2020, staff collected and distributed food, water and hygiene products to clients in need. The Coachella Valley Rescue Mission was instrumental in its support of our efforts by donating sack lunches and nonperishable food to the cause. Probation staff also aided the residents of Blythe by donating bottled water to the Blythe Community Center which, through the Riverside County Office on Aging, provides prepared lunches and boxes of food and supplies for senior citizens in need. Probation staff assisted those efforts by delivering boxes to homebound seniors and will continue to help with deliveries as needed.

In addition, DSD staff from the Palm Springs office donated and delivered much-needed bottled water to the Galilee Center in Mecca while the Indio office hosted a LifeStream blood drive that culminated in 20 pints of blood and seven new donors. Staff from the Blythe and Indio offices sewed and donated nearly 300 face masks for adults and children to a multitude of local agencies and personnel including the Palo Verde College Child Development Center in Blythe. All who participated agreed the opportunity to provide additional support services to the community was a rewarding experience.



IN TIME OF NEED

BY SUPERVISING PROBATION OFFICERS RON CHERKIN AND DEPUTY PROBATION OFFICER HILDA FAVELA

During these challenging times, the Riverside County Probation (RCP) Department's vision remains the same: To provide the citizens of Riverside County with quality public safety services and an environment that is conducive to a safe, healthy and productive lifestyle. Although the method of service delivery has altered, staff at the Metro East Services Division (MESD) continue to collaborate with clients to work on their goals and rehabilitative needs. For many of the probationers, this includes becoming "job ready" and meeting their basic daily necessities with food items and housing. Seeing the needs increase during this time, MESD staff reached out to local community-based organizations to see how probation could collaborate to provide clients with resources their organizations offered.

Staff reached out to local food banks to create food packages for clients. Additionally, DPO Paul Carper networked with the United Way of the Inland Valley and the Inland Empire United Way to obtain Wolverine work boots for clients who are preparing to enter the workforce. Housing was arranged for all Post-Release Community Supervision reentry clients who expressed a need and our clients have responded with an abundance of gratitude. These efforts help set a tone of partnership between clients and officers that will extend beyond the COVID-19 pandemic.

CARE DROP INCOMING!

BY MEDIA PRODUCTION SPECIALIST JAVIER SANTOS

The Metro West Services Division, Juvenile Supervision Unit has stepped up in this time of difficulty by providing care packages to clients in need. On May 13, 2020, the unit visited Hope Lutheran Church in Riverside, where they were provided with generous care packages that were tailored to specific families under our officers' caseloads. The food pantry opened in March, the same week Governor Newsom issued stay-at-home guidance to California residents.

"We originally planned on only being open one day a month," explained Pastor Julie Kelly, "but needs quickly indicated expansion of hours." The pantry now operates Monday through Wednesday from 9:30 to 11:30 a.m., partnering with the University of California, Riverside and the organization Feeding America to "provide sufficient produce and protein food" to the community.



The Juvenile Supervision Unit delivered the care packages throughout the morning, ensuring that the families were given the appropriate provisions: non-perishable foods, diapers and pet food.

Additionally, on May 21, Senior Probation Officer Walsh and Deputy Probation Officer Hernandez-Alvear stopped by Miguel's Jr. in Norco, where they picked up freshly prepared meals to deliver to juvenile clients in the area. Senior PO Walsh explained the gesture as both reward and incentive for the juveniles, who have worked diligently to remotely attend school and court proceedings.

"Our staff have done an amazing job," said Walsh. "They're finding new ways to supervise people. They're finding different community service events that the kids participate in."

A big thanks to Miguel's Jr. for their delicious donation, to Hope Lutheran Church for providing hope to the community and to Metro West's Juvenile Supervision Unit for your thoughtful service to our clients!



ABOUT HOPE LUTHERAN CHURCH'S FOOD PANTRY

It is a donation-funded and volunteer-driven pantry and we rely on the generosity of our community to remain open.

Current Hours: **M-W | 9:30AM - 11:30AM**

Website: hoperiverside.org

Instagram: [@hoperiversideca](https://www.instagram.com/hoperiversideca)

Facebook: [Hope Lutheran Church, Riverside](https://www.facebook.com/HopeLutheranChurchRiverside)





SPECIAL DELIVERY

BY SUPERVISING PROBATION OFFICER CHARLES ROBERTS

The coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic has caught the world off guard and unprepared. No one, not even the medical professionals know exactly what to do. Scientists and doctors all over are scrambling to produce solutions to a growing list of problems. Our community has not been spared either. As the crisis unfolded, we faced the realization that almost no one had proper personal protective equipment (PPE). Therefore, many people were forced to make substandard masks with materials they could scrounge up around the house. Consequently, our elderly and immunocompromised citizens are especially at risk of exposure; in that, just a trip to the grocery store without proper PPE could lead to grave consequences. Other citizens have lost their jobs and are struggling to obtain basic necessities like food and clothing; and homelessness remains a constant challenge.

As anticipated, over the last month, probation referrals and placement into emergency housing increased, demonstrating the ripple effect of the crisis. At the urging of Mid County Division (MCD) managers, and in an attempt to address some of these issues, MCD staff reached out to faith-based organizations and community-based organizations and quickly formed a new partnership to assist the most vulnerable segment of our community. A dynamic collaboration was formed when Fellowship in the Pass and Valley Community Pantry agreed to provide well-stocked care packages for those families MCD identified in need. These packages were delivered to the identified probationers' homes by MCD. Moreover, we agreed to deliver packages to non-probationers, particularly the elderly in the community.

As a citizen of Riverside County, I would like to thank our entire staff for their commitment to excellence and caring for the community and give a special shout out to Senior Probation Officer Henry Passmore and Deputy Probation Officer (DPO) Monica Farrell for leading these worthy efforts. They were assisted by most of the MCD staff from each office; however, DPO Cindy Gil, Probation Specialist Veronica Hewitt, DPO Roger Medina and DPO Kari Thelwell deserve special recognition for their assistance as well. I also want to thank Fellowship in the Pass and Valley Community Pantry for providing the much-needed care packages.

Stay safe at home and work.

VIDEO VISITS

BY SUPERVISING PROBATION OFFICER JACOB BROWN

Weekends were historically when our juvenile facilities hosted family visits for the youth. That changed in March 2020 in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Visits were suspended and remain on hold in order to protect our staff and the youth. Imagine telling a facility of youth that they would be unable to see their loved ones any time soon. Add to that the uncertainty of when other meaningful activities would resume. With that in mind, we recognized the value and need to ensure that youth and their families could continue to see each other through other means. In a short time, our juvenile facilities implemented the use of weekly video visitations. The youth and their families look forward to the video visits and have been very appreciative of the efforts to keep them connected.

While most may agree that a video visit is not the same as seeing a loved one in person, there is a trade-off; I have noticed that the video visits have afforded family members more flexibility to connect with the youth. Parents at work have been able to take breaks for video visits. Being out of town is no longer a hindrance. Transportation issues no longer get in the way. Moreover, parents who once were unable to visit due to childcare issues or physical ailments can now see their children utilizing video visits.

It is easy to dwell on the adverse effects of this pandemic. I imagine that all of us have done more than our fair share of it. However, on occasion something good will rear its head from a traumatic event. I believe the adoption of this technology in our juvenile facilities is one of those good things that arose in the midst of this pandemic.





ALWAYS LEARNING

HOW TELECOMMUTING IMPACTS THE STAFF DEVELOPMENT UNIT

BY SUPERVISING PROBATION OFFICER CHAZ MARIN

COVID-19 has definitely been a game changer! The pandemic swept the nation and delivered a massive blow to the Staff Development Unit's operations. All scheduled trainings were suspended from March 16 to June 19. This created a huge deficit of courses available to meet the mandatory training requirement. The Staff Development Unit kicked into high gear and thought outside of the box. Online trainings were implemented and the unit ensured the department remained in compliance with standards set by the Board of State and Community Corrections.

Of course, we do not attend courses simply to meet the mandatory hours. Training is about gaining knowledge and acquiring new skillsets. While learning online is an alternative means of doing business, it allowed us the opportunity to acquire new technologies and expand our scope of learning. Our outside training providers offered courses via Zoom, which forced us to learn this new software platform. We relied on other units to provide the necessary audio/visual equipment to enable staff to participate in these classes. A big thank you to the BIOS Unit!



Not to say this change was easy, online courses came with their own set of obstacles. The unit had to frequently provide instructions to staff and troubleshoot issues they encountered with equipment or software. In addition, we learned how to use the County WebEx platform; which encouraged participation in online mandatory trainings. Our workload drastically increased as the online courses provided by the National Institute for Correction and the county mandated trainings required STC certifications.

During this time, the Staff Development unit itself stayed connected and kept the lines of communication open by learning and utilizing Microsoft Teams. Each morning we held our daily huddle, discussed issues that occurred and brainstormed ways to solve them. We learned being separated physically makes it important to stay connected virtually!

In a short timeframe, we adapted to the obstacles and the increased workload by stepping up our game, being resourceful, continuously learning and having a can-do attitude! Lesson learned- stay teachable- with that we can overcome any obstacle!

“*Training is about gaining knowledge and acquiring new skillsets. While learning ‘online’ is an alternative means of doing business, it allowed us the opportunity to acquire new technologies and expand our scope of learning.*”



RECOVERY PREP

BY KEN FLAHERTY, PRESIDENT OF THE KENSEI GROUP

Every organization has been impacted by the COVID-19 crisis and all of them are thinking about how to position themselves once the crisis has passed and things return to normal. The question is, what will normal look like? While no one can say how long the crisis will last, what we find on the other side will not look like the normal of recent years. To deal with these challenges, we launched a cross-functional team to understand our current challenges and make recommendations to counter the level of changes that are required to keep our staff safe and ensure our department is meeting its mission. The makeup of this team includes team leader Assistant Chief Probation Officer Bryce Hulstrom, Chief Deputy Probation Administrator Doug Moreno, Division Director Shelley Vedrode, Information Technology Officer Joe Atalla and Assistant Division Directors Daniel Castañeda, Olivia Serna and Jason Beam.

The purpose of this team is to get ahead of the next stages of the crisis and ensure we are prepared to meet the challenges of the future. By collectively understanding and sharing the current day-to-day challenges facing the department, the Plan-Ahead Team helps elevate needed responses and categorizes potential solutions required to address the future needs of the department. Its objective is to enable integrated and quick thinking that aids the Chief Probation Officer to navigate through this unprecedented and rapidly evolving situation. The Plan-Ahead Team delivers scenarios, recommendations for actions and trigger points to the Executive Team so that they can decide on the right course of action. The decisions will be communicated to the Management Support Team or other functions of the department for execution.

Below are just a few discussion topics and questions raised by the team:

- ▶ *What types of social distancing are needed for office locations to keep our staff safe?*
- ▶ *The value of telecommuting for certain functions of work.*
- ▶ *The need to explore the use of digital technology and the skillsets needed to embrace that digital technology.*
- ▶ *How will the budget shortfall impact our department and how can we best prepare for it?*

This team is in the early stages of the process, but we anticipate that their efforts will safeguard our department's resiliency by maintaining the continuity of our mission and ensuring our staff can perform their work safely. We look forward to communicating their recommendations in the weeks to come.



**PLEASE FOLLOW RIVERSIDE UNIVERSITY HEALTH
SYSTEM - PUBLIC HEALTH FOR THE VERY LATEST
UPDATES ON THE COVID-19 RESPONSE
IN RIVERSIDE COUNTY**



Riverside University Health System - Public Health

WWW.RIVCOPH.ORG/CORONAVIRUS

 **[@CountyRiversideDepartmentOfPublicHealth](https://www.facebook.com/CountyRiversideDepartmentOfPublicHealth)**

 **[@RivCoDoc](https://twitter.com/RivCoDoc)**

 **vimeo.com/rivcopublichealth**

BREAKING THE CYCLE

STORIES FROM RCP'S INSTITUTIONS

EASTER AT IJH

BY SUPERVISING PROBATION OFFICER ANGELICA RODRIGUEZ

Easter 2020, we can all agree, was different from any other in recent experience. As a nation, we were thrust into a new reality where families continued to shelter in place, masks were the new Spring fashion accessory and services in houses of worship were cancelled. Detention facilities across California were also expected to abide by these new social expectations.

Indio Juvenile Hall (IJH) staff, in tandem with our Behavioral Health staff, put together a creative Easter experience that allowed for some semblance of normalcy for both staff and youth. It was an opportunity to enjoy a beautiful morning outside in the sunshine, fun and exercise, all while wearing face coverings and practicing social distancing.

Events included an egg toss, water balloon catch and an organized Easter egg hunt. Youth collected eggs in handwoven baskets they worked on individually the week prior. A lucky few were able to redeem their golden eggs for prizes that included journals, puzzles and special meals just to name a few. They competed in team obstacle courses and an individual Easter Bunny shot put challenge. Youth were extremely appreciative of the festivities and a few youth remarked how nice it felt to play like a kid for a change. One youth stated he had never participated in an Easter egg hunt and didn't even know how it worked.

Youth interested in attending religious services were afforded the opportunity to participate in church facilitated by our dedicated group of volunteers who are continuing to offer their services via online meeting platforms. Youth and volunteers were able to worship, study, take part in discussions and enjoy music. The coronavirus made Easter a challenge, but like IJH staff, the Easter Bunny is an essential worker!



THE 2020 HOMELESS COUNT

BY DPO LAWRENCE ABEE

On January 29, 2020, I participated in the Riverside County Homeless 2020 Point-In-Time (PIT) Count along with other volunteers and collaborative agencies. The PIT Count is an annual mandate that counts and surveys the sheltered and unsheltered homeless population throughout the nation. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development defines the unsheltered as those who reside in places not meant for human habitation, such as cars, parks, sidewalks, abandoned buildings, river bottoms or the street. While, the PIT Count provides a snapshot of the county's visible homeless, it does not completely represent the entire homeless population.

In Corona, approximately 30 partners deployed amongst five teams to conduct the count. The teams included members from the Corona Police Department's Homeless Outreach & Psychological Evaluation (HOPE) Unit, nonprofit professionals from City Net, Corona Code Enforcement, Riverside County University Health System, City Council, County Board/Executive Office, researchers from the University of California Los Angeles and citizen volunteers. As teams conducted surveys of encampments around Corona, contact was made with several unsheltered individuals. They were provided information to raise awareness of the resources available throughout the city and county. Throughout the day, I discussed our department's evidenced-based practices and programs such as the Day Reporting Centers, Transitional Re-Entry Unit, Whole Person Care and Homeless Housing Opportunities Partnership and Education/AB109 housing, with various stakeholders.

Although there are a multitude of paradigms associated with generalizations of homelessness, there was one example in particular that stood out. The team met an elderly couple living in a shanty tent, both gainfully employed and productive members of society with no criminal nexus. It begs the question: How can our community help them?

Probation Officers have meaningful insights and have the power to turn them into bold ideas with clear action. This position allows probation to observe the uniqueness of people at the intersection of the courts, public safety service and the role in making genuine impacts on people's lives. The PIT Count was a good experience and I'm looking forward to future collaborations.



THE RIGHT TRACK AT SAN JAC

BY SPO MATTHEW THOMPSON

In an effort to implement Lean principles and improve services to youth, the San Jacinto Juvenile Unit initiated collaboration with our Riverside University Health System - Behavioral Health (RUHS-BH) partners to streamline referrals and communication between our agencies. The RUHS-BH program provides substance abuse and anger management programming, as well as preventative services. The collaboration resulted in improved communication of youth status/performance and regular interaction to ensure coordination of treatment goals. Periodic meetings ensured the process was working well. During a recent meeting, RUHS-BH treatment provider Kelly Ortiz stated she gets great feedback about probation from the youth. They tell her that the San Jacinto Juvenile Unit is caring and involved.

Regarding Deputy Probation Officer (DPO) Thelwell, one youth stated, "I love her!" Another youth said of DPO Fosado, "She's really helpful." When Ms. Ortiz advised a youth that failure to comply with program requirements would bring about a talk with DPO Fosado, the youth said, "I like my PO." These were just several of the accolades bestowed upon the probation team.

It is motivating to see how hard work, caring and the pursuit of excellence by our staff is reflected in the lives of these youth. Juvenile probation is challenging and at times stressful, yet here again, we see staff rising above the difficulty of reports, scheduling and deadlines to care for these youth. These efforts and attitudes are making a genuine impact and these officers deserve recognition for the tremendous job they do.

GRAD DAY AT THE DRC

BY SPO RONALD CHERKIN & SR. PO TARA WILLEY

The Riverside County Probation Department's Day Reporting Centers (DRCs) are always ready to assist our clients during the COVID-19 pandemic. Staff members are working with collaborative agencies to provide clients with services that include individual counseling, substance abuse treatment, crisis response, peer support, mentoring, parenting classes, employment services, education, food, clothing, housing and assistance with CalFresh and Medi-Cal enrollment. These services have ensured a strong connection is maintained between clients and probation, which is integral for changing lives. In addition, the DRCs are preparing for the annual graduation ceremony for those who have completed the requirements to receive a high school diploma or GED. We recently distributed graduation ceremony caps, gowns and gift bags to the DRC students who will graduate in a virtual ceremony on May 26, 2020. In a speech prepared for the virtual graduation ceremony, one of the graduates stated, "I met some amazing people in the DRC who are always full of energy with great personalities...they made me realize that everyone has a value and is worth helping out." The DRCs continue to do whatever it takes to help our clients be successful during this difficult time.



**LIA
MILES**
OFFICE ASSISTANT III



I AM RCP

STAFF SPOTLIGHT

1. What motivated you to begin a career with the Riverside County Probation Department?
I was looking for a permanent position that offered stability and career growth.

2. How long have you worked for the department?
I have worked for the department for 13 years. I became a permanent employee in May 2007.

3. What is your current position? Describe your responsibilities within your current role.
My current position is Office Assistant III with the Southwest Services Division, assigned to the Temecula Day Reporting Center (DRC). Some of my job duties include scheduling DRC intake appointments, client file setup, entering participants' class schedules in JAMS and maintaining class rosters. I'm also responsible for submitting supply orders and service requests for office maintenance and IT related issues, but the most rewarding part of my job is engaging with our clients.

4. Many people change careers during their lifetime; what motivates you to continue your career with the department?
I'm not someone that moves from job to job. When I came to the department, I knew early on that this was the perfect fit for me. Establishing a good rapport with supervisors and co-workers throughout the years has made my job enjoyable, even during challenging times.

5. Thinking back to when you first began with the Probation Department, did you set a career path goal?
When I started with the department, my goal was to promote; however, personal choices stopped me moving forward when the opportunity presented itself. I have no regrets, timing is everything. I'm happy in my current assignment and strive each day to have a positive attitude and be a role model for my peers.





6. What goals have you set out to accomplish in your current position?

In my current position, the goal I have set for myself is to be more organized. Being the only OA in the office, I want things to run as smoothly as possible, especially when I'm away from my desk. In addition, I want to learn new skills that will help me best serve our clients. I will be taking advantage of the online customer service tutorials offered through COR Learning.

7. What do you enjoy about your current position? What are the challenges?

I'm blessed to be a part of the Temecula DRC. We are a great team that works together to change the lives of clients. Sometimes it's a challenge to get clients to buy into taking classes, but the gratitude and thanks received when they've accomplished a goal is heartfelt and I take great pride in knowing I played a small part in their accomplishments.

8. What (CORE VALUES) do you believe are most important to the success of our employees or interested job seekers?

All values are equally important, but the values I believe that are most important to the success of our employees or interested job seekers are: Honesty, integrity, accountability, respect and compassion.

9. Do you have any memorable moments to share?

I've worked as an Office Assistant III at the Temecula Probation office, Murrieta Probation office and I'm currently assigned to the Temecula DRC. A memorable experience was when I was assigned to the Temecula Probation office and I was recognized by my supervisor and co-workers as the 2009 Southwest Services Division Employee of the Year. I've received other awards and recognitions throughout the years, but this is the most memorable as it was the start of my journey with the department.

10. Based on your experience, do you have any words of advice for staff?

The best advice I can give is to take pride in the job you do, work to the best of your ability and don't be afraid to ask questions or take initiative. There will be challenges but keep a positive attitude. It's important to remember we are all on the same team and it takes a collective effort to succeed.

11. Do you have any hobbies or outside interests you would like to share?

I enjoy cooking and going to the movies. I love to hide out and binge on Hallmark and ID Channel, but what I most enjoy is spending quality time with my family. I also enjoy what I like to refer to as "me time," which is when I take time for myself to relax and give thanks to God for all he has done in my life.



SENIOR PROBATION OFFICER

Henry Passmore

Senior Probation Officer Henry Passmore came to RCP from the Information Technology (IT) field. He graduated cum laude from DeVry University with a degree in Telecommunications Management in 2000 and eventually joined Riverside County in 2007 as an IT User Tech Support staff with the Department of Public Social Services (DPSS). It was while working in a building shared by DPSS and RCP that he learned of the Deputy Probation Officer opening. Passmore had the opportunity to speak with probation officers about their jobs. He had always been interested in law enforcement and was in backgrounds with several agencies. He was encouraged by their description of RCP and the ability to help the community which is what led him to apply. He was hired in 2008 and has been happy with his decision ever since.



Passmore is currently assigned to AB109 Level 1 Supervision. Other positions he's held include Adult Investigations, Juvenile Supervision, Placement, Juvenile Investigations, Pretrial Investigations, Pretrial Supervision, CCPIA Level 3 Supervision and Adult Court Officer.

The most challenging aspect of the job is to remain optimistic when it's easy to become jaded, according to Passmore. He reminds himself to look at the big picture and remember the daily victories, even if they seem small. "What we may consider a small victory could be huge in the eyes of our clients," he said.

Passmore finds knowing that he is making a difference in people's lives the most rewarding aspect of his job - sometimes with clients and sometimes with their families. "It's encouraging to be thanked by a client for holding them accountable or to see a small child hold onto their parent's hand when picking up a termination letter," Passmore said.

One of Passmore's most memorable experiences was with a client who came from a family with various degrees of mental illness. His parents and siblings were consistently in and out of custody, and he was at a point where he did not want to follow in their footsteps. Helping him get into mental health counseling and holding him accountable for medication compliance kept him on track. While being more stable with his mental health, he was able to rent out a room with his girlfriend. She credited RCP for their relationship, as he became more consistent in treating her with respect and dignity. "Seeing clients become successful is the ultimate reward for what we do," he added.

Passmore advises new Deputy Probation Officers to always embrace change, whether they agree with it initially or not. There will be many changes throughout their careers as probation officers, from assignments to policy and procedures. He feels that if they have a positive attitude, they'll be able to learn and transform with the change. "Change is always for the good," he said. "It just sometimes takes a little bit for you to see it."



PROMOTIONS

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