



Community Service Restitution Unit

Triannual e-Newsletter

January - April 2016

Serving Our Youth Since 1980



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Words for Success

To provide CSR youth with useful information and positive messaging, we kicked-off a *Words for Success Speakers Series* in the month of January.

Speakers from the local community present on relevant topics to youth in the work crew activity. Presentations are up to one hour in duration.

Topics include information on substance abuse, Internet safety, healthy relationships, etc. In addition, we look for speakers, such as athletes and artists, who have a motivational or inspirational message to relay.



Eric Castillo Shares His Story
 "The Power of a Dream"

In this cycle, the following presentations took place:

- **Eric Castillo** presented a powerful message of perseverance and redemption. Eric was the inspiration for a documentary, *The Power of a Dream*. His life story goes from struggling with alcoholism to walking on to the University of the Incarnate Word's football team. He is an active member of our community and past recipient of the KSAT 12 Community Service Award for collecting and donating thousands of shoes to the needy. An effort realized through his non-profit, A Walk In My Shoes.

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- **Madelein Santibanez**, Girl Zone Program Coordinator for Martinez Street Women's Center, led a session entitled "Coyotasos." In this interactive session, the areas of violence and substance abuse as unhealthy reactions to life's pains were examined.
- **Pablo Villanueva** and **Adriana Garza**, Prevention Specialists with the San Antonio Council on Alcohol and Drug Abuse (SACADA), delivered a presentation entitled "Does Legal Mean Safe." This presentation covered two themes related to marijuana use: Perception of Marijuana and Legal Ramifications.



Madelein Santibanez

- **Jenn Tristan**, Director of Education with the Rape Crisis Center, discussed healthy relationships and addressed types of violence in relationships, healthy versus unhealthy characteristics, and understanding and respecting boundaries.



Jenn Tristan
Rape Crisis Center

- **Joshua Casso**, Certified Recovery Coach with Rise Recovery (Palmer Drug Abuse Program), shared his testimony about the many challenges he faced on the way to his recovery. He provided youth with information on the availability of drug abuse prevention and treatment services.



Joshua Casso

Many thanks to these partners for taking time to share their thoughts, encouragement, and expertise with our youth. ■



Pictured L to R: Pablo Villanueva, SACADA; Pete Gonzales, CSR Supervisor; and, Adriana Garza, SACADA. Barely visible in the background is CSR Specialist Steve Lerma .

BBQ FUNDRAISER



**Top Ticket Seller:
Vanessa Vasquez**

Our 7th annual barbecue plate fundraiser was held on March 10th. With the support of many, we had a very successful fundraiser. Monies raised are to be used to buy incentives for our youth and purchase supplies for service learning projects. Regrettably, we had to turn away several walk-ups as plates were set aside for pre-paid ticket holders. For this, we apologize. We simply underestimated the number of folks who decided to buy plates the day of the fundraiser.

As usual, CSR staff cooked, sold, and served chicken and sausage plates. Gratitude goes to probation department staff and community partners who supported

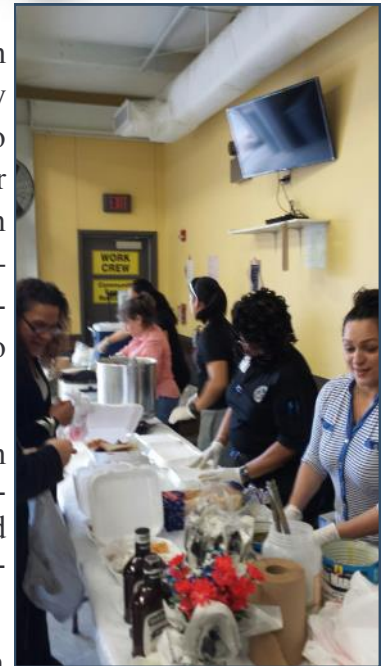
the fundraiser, especially Goodwill Industries and the San Antonio Police Department for purchasing 51 and 24 plates, respectively.

Of course, many thanks to all our CSR staff who made this event a success. In particular, CSR Lead Specialist Joe Medellin (Head Cook) and his two side kicks, Specialists Steven Lerma and Arturo Gutierrez, who got up very early to barbecue on what turned out to be a rainy morning.

Special thanks to Specialist Vanessa Vasquez's grandmother, Yolanda Vasquez, who cooked thirty pounds of delish rice and beans. Impressively, this year's top ticket seller was Vanessa who sold 103 tickets — an all-time high.

In addition, we would be remiss not to thank the following for their donation of money and/or time to the event: Dr. Alma Ortiz, Olivia Robinson, Crystal Guerra, and Donna Garrett. Hopefully, we have not overlooked anyone's contribution.

Here's looking forward to next year's fundraiser, and once again thank you everyone for supporting our department's youth and program. ■



Serving Line



Pictured Left to Right: Joe Medellin, Steve Lerma, Deputy Chief Karl Johnson, and Arturo Gutierrez

SMALL ENGINE M&R

Service learning projects add a strong learning component to community service programs. In this regard, the Small Engine Maintenance & Repair Project was held from February to April. Specialist Steve Lerma served as project lead and was assisted by Lead Specialist Joe Medellin.

Youth were introduced to basic skills associated with the maintenance and repair of lawn equipment. This includes tools and small gas engine operated equipment such as lawn mowers and weed trimmers. By the end of the project, youth were able to identify and use appropriate tools, recognize different fuel systems, understand basic carburetion principles, and perform small engine tune-up and add lubrication/oil.

Hands-on training was supplemented with a tour of the Aviation Hangar and Sheet Metal Shop at Alamo Community College (ACC). For taking time to talk to our youth about engine combustion, educational opportunities in the field, and more, many thanks go to John Haral, Associate Professor, and Richard Jewell, Instructor, at ACC's Aircraft Technology Program.

Additionally, youth showcased their new skills by performing a free lawn mower spring tune-up on Saturday, April 9th., at the Frank Garrett Center. At this lawn mower spring tune-up, youth changed motor oil, replaced spark plugs, air filters, and cutting blades.

Many thanks go to Garrett Center staff Raul Garza, Supervisor, and Sonny Saenz, Assistant Supervisor, for partnering with us on the lawn mower spring tune-up. Garrett Center staff identified all recipients of these services, namely senior residents. ■



John Haral, ACC Associate Professor, Talks to Service Learning Youth



Seniors Drop Off Their Lawnmowers at the Frank Garrett Center

For questions, comments or suggestions on this newsletter, please contact:

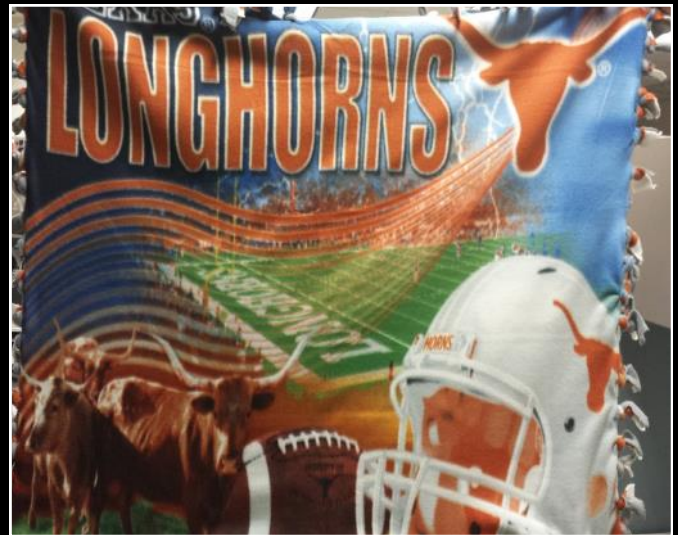
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Fleece Blankets

Instances come up when some youth are unable to complete their CSR hours the traditional way. One example is a change in their health circumstance, to include pregnancy.

To meet this need, we have implemented a tie knot fleece blanket project. The CSR program buys the fabric, and CSR staff instructs youth on how to make the blanket – a simple knot tying process. Youth may complete these blankets on-site or at home. Each blanket is worth 10-CSR credit hours.

We donate finished blankets to local non-profits. ■



The Final Product
Hook 'Em Horns Blanket

GLOBAL YOUTH SERVICE DAY 2016



Our Youth Making Blankets for Homeless Children

Global Youth Service Day (GYSD) is an annual campaign that celebrates the millions of children and youth who improve their communities each day of the year through community service. Established in 1988 as National Youth Service Day in the United States, and expanded globally in 2000, Global Youth Service Day is the largest service event in the world. It is now celebrated in over 100 countries. In Texas, it is celebrated the entire month of April. The Texas Juvenile Justice Department is the lead agency in the state. Bexar County Juvenile Probation Department's participation in this event dates back to 1991.

This year, our youth spent six days in April learning about homelessness and providing services for the homeless. On a couple of instances, they were joined by youth from the Ayers Halfway House and San Antonio Parole Services. All youth learned about risk factors associated with homelessness, impact on individuals and community, prevention services, etc. They then performed community service at SAMMinistries. Additionally, probation youth made tie knot blankets which were donated to homeless children living at SAMMinistries and Haven for Hope.

The blanket donation was made possible through a \$400 grant. Our grant application was one of twelve selected statewide for an award by the State Volunteer Resources Council (SVRC) for Texas Youth. Grant funds were underwritten by the Texas Community Service Association.

A highlight for our youth took place on Saturday morning, April 9th. On that day, State Representative Ina Minjarez (Dist. 124) came by the facility to share her thoughts on the plight of the homeless and to thank our youth for their service to the homeless. Many thanks go to Representative Minjarez for the visit.

On this project, CSR Specialist Jesse Vielma served as lead. Specialist Tony Talamantez assisted. ■

Goodwill Industries

Congratulations and a BIG thank you to Goodwill Industries, CSR's "2015 Top Work Site."

In 2015, approximately twenty percent (over 5,000 hours) of all community service hours performed by our probation youth were completed at various Goodwill stores. In addition, Goodwill staff demonstrate a high degree of responsiveness and flexibility in interactions with our staff, clients and their families.

Kathleen Murray, Goodwill's Volunteer Relationship Coordinator, graciously accepted the award at the VIP Banquet held on Saturday, April 9th. ■



L to R: CSR Specialist Amanda Torres & Kathleen Murray

The Texas Ramp Project is a statewide nonprofit that builds free wheelchair ramps for elderly and disabled people who can't afford them on their own. These ADA-compliant ramps are built by local volunteers throughout the state.

On February 10th, John Laine, State Coordinator for the Texas Ramp Project, trained CSR Specialists Joe Medellin, Steve Lerma, and Jesse Vielma on ramp building. This is hands-on training. Additional training took place on March 22nd. These staff are now able to lead work crews in the construction of these ramps. Our plan is to build at least one ramp per month.

To learn more about the Texas Ramp Project, please go to www.texasramps.org. ■



Pictured L to R: Joe Medellin, Steve Lerma, & Jesse Vielma



John Laine
Texas Ramp Project's State Coordinator