



CSSD Chronicle



A regular publication of information and news about the Court Support Services Division

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Monday, November 16, 2009

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COMMUNITY PROVIDERS REACH OUT TO CSSD CLIENTS

"HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH" AT THE ARRC

Food was a part of a local event as staff and clients of the Wheeler Clinic's Adult Risk Reduction Center (ARRC) and the Alternative Incarceration Center (AIC) celebrated Hispanic Heritage Month, which ran from September 15th to October 15th. As bachata, meringue, and salsa music played in the background, a potluck luncheon was held at the New Britain site, which featured pastelón (a layered casserole of ground meat and mashed plantains), arroz y habichuela (rice with beans), perril (spiced pork), empanadas (pastry pockets filled with meat and cheese), guacamole, Spanish sodas and juices.

History of the Celebration - Hispanic Heritage Month began as a week observance in 1968 and was expanded by President Ronald Reagan in 1988 to cover a 30-day period. September 15th was chosen as the starting point for the celebration because it is the anniversary of independence of five Latin American countries: Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua, which all declared independence in 1821. In addition, Mexico, Chile and Belize celebrate their independence days in September as well. A large, colorful collage, part of which is pictured below,



decorated a wall of the ARRC. The collage featured photos, facts, and other information on Hispanic countries and was created by staff members of the ARRC and AIC.

Celebremos la herencia hispana! - Arabellys Hidalgo, Wheeler's Women Offender Case Management Model (WOCMM) Resource Advocate organized a wide-range of Spanish activities during the month including Spanish and

English lessons for staff and clients. Hidalgo noted that the classes were very popular. Several ARRC and AIC staff attended more than one session, and one person attended eight of nine classes! Spanish words were placed on items around the building to reinforce the learned vocabulary. Hidalgo also made up Spanish/English activity sheets, such as word finds and crossword puzzles to help make learning a new language engaging and fun. And, each day, a "Spanish Recipe of the Day" was sent to staff.

For more information contact Arabellys Hidalgo, Wheeler Clinic at ahidalgo@wheelerclinic.org

...AND THERE WAS MORE!

On Thursday, October 29th, the Project M.O.R.E./New Haven AIC also held a Hispanic Heritage Celebration. Over 100 clients, staff, and community leaders, including Alderwoman Dolores Colon, came out for the center's first annual event. CSSD's Bill Carbone and Regional Manager Hilda Nieves were also guests, along with Ms. Puerto Rico of New Haven, Kelly Cruz. Ms. Cruz shared a reading of her poetry that focused on her experiences as a young Latina in the United States.

Food, music, and dancing - Many Latin American food dishes were served, including pollo fricase (sautéed chicken), after guests enjoyed a musical performance by Los Otanales, a Spanish Folk Band from Casa Otonal Senior Center in New Haven. A dance performance by the Bomba Troupe Flor de Cana (*see photo below*), accompanied the music. AIC staff Nelson Cruz, Nicole Piscitallo and Kendrick Baker are dancers in the troupe. "Clients really gravitated toward the band and the dancers," said Addys Castillo, AIC Program Director.



SUGGESTIONS? QUESTIONS? COMMENTS? CONCERNS? CONTACT US!

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“They had questions about the instruments, acoustics, and kept asking band members to play another song.”

Project APOYO continues in New Haven - The celebration was also an opportunity for the AIC to publicly announce that Project APOYO (Alternative to Prison Opportunities for Youthful Offenders) would soon become part of the center’s client services. Project APOYO targets inner-city Hispanic youth who are court-involved, and provides them with bi-lingual and culturally relevant supervision, support, and education needed to bring about a positive and productive lifestyle.

For more information contact Addys Castillo, Program Director at addy.castillo@projectmore.org

BRIDGEPORT DETENTION “WELLNESS FAIR”

On September 16th, staff and community members from the Waterbury, Norwalk, Bridgeport and Stamford area came to the Bridgeport Detention Center for a “Wellness Fair” to promote the theme of “Healthy Mind and Body” to the center’s young detainees.

Healthy Offerings – Sarsfield Ford, a Food Service Assistant at the Bridgeport Detention Center talked to the children about healthy eating habits and allowed them to help prepare lunch that day. Juvenile Probation Officer Jonathan Davis presented stretching exercises from Tai Chi, while Robert Fulton, a local gym owner, spoke about machine, free-weight, and cardio exercise—all excellent ways for youngsters to relieve stress and anxiety while maintaining a healthy body. Captain Chris Lyddy of the Fairfield Police *Explorers*, and Retired Lt. Edward Reilly of the *Police Athletic League (PAL)* promoted their respective organization’s educational, athletic, and recreational programs. Representatives from social service groups—Safe Haven of Greater Waterbury and South West Community Health Center—were also available to offer information on healthy relationships, dating violence, the effects of drugs and alcohol, education alternatives, and health insurance.

A Bridge to the Outside - According to Center Superintendent Kathy Vernon, “The kids learn while they are here about making good choices but once they’re released, it’s difficult for them to continue on their own. Where can they go for information when a question comes



“Wellness Fair” - Representatives from Southwest Community Health Center

up or a crisis occurs?” Written material and contact information on the wellness curriculum was given to detainees for their use upon release. Vernon also shared the positive comments from the children, taken from thank you letters to the Bridgeport staff. “Yesterday, during the fair, I learned the right things to eat and how to take care of our bodies,” wrote one child. Another child was impressed with “the staff talk[ing] about all the things that can happen to our body if we don’t protect ourselves.”

Special Thanks - The event was organized by the detention center’s Program Services Supervisor, Sherrie Morran, Deputy Superintendent Lorraine Soares, CPO’s Lisa Hamlett and Melissa DeStefano, and a dozen other members of the center’s permanent Wellness Committee. Vernon noted the staff’s willingness to “go above and beyond their job descriptions in order to better serve the children and the families of the community. I am extremely proud of [them].” **For more information** about Wellness Committee events at the Bridgeport Detention Center, contact Superintendent Kathy Vernon at Kathy.Vernon@jud.ct.gov



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