



## Human Services (HS)

# Employees of the Month

HS Connection Staff



**James Marin, Nutritionist**  
**Department of Public Health (DPH)**

James has taken the initiative to spearhead a new project for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), Participant Centered Marketing (PCM). PCM is improving the manner in which our participants are engaged and maintained. With his efforts, WIC is finding new ways to use time spent in WIC waiting rooms/lobbies as an opportunity to educate our participants through locally produced media and videos. These videos use actual WIC participants to show the direct connection our population has to the messages WIC is working on conveying. James' drive and enthusiasm is commendable and should be recognized as a part of our Countywide Vision in Action.



**Joan Bacon, Payroll Specialist**  
**HS Personnel**

Joan has been employed with San Bernardino County since September of 2006, but began her time with HS Personnel in July of 2012. Joan takes great customer service to heart and really goes out of her way to be as available and helpful as she can be. She routinely goes above and beyond for Human Services employees and is quick to help out her fellow co-workers when needed.

Joan has really grown a great deal in her short time with Human Services. She is always asking for additional duties and inquiring about what else she can learn. When management has an important task, Joan is quick to work on solutions and has a true desire to fix any problems or issues that arise. She really believes in HS Personnel's mission and is a dependable and trustworthy employee.

Joan has been married for 14 years and has a 14 year old son as well. She enjoys spending her free time doing things outdoors including bike rides, hiking, zip-lining, and kayaking. She has a passion for good food as well as relaxing with a good fantasy novel. HS Personnel is grateful to have employees like Joan and is a better operation with her on the team.



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**Elmer Fuentes, Department Systems Engineer  
Information, Technology & Support Division (ITSD)**

Elmer has been a Department Systems Engineer with the Information, Technology & Support Division (ITSD) since April of 2012. His first priority since arriving and being assigned the duties of Server and Storage Management has always been to provide overall good customer service. Elmer has since devoted his attentions to all responsibilities in this area and made maximum use of his team resources.

Since being with ITSD, Elmer has recognized the importance of utilizing his practical hands-on experience to successfully build and maintain essential operations infrastructure covering a variety of functions. He has clearly demonstrated that he possesses the knowledge to handle work of the most complex nature.

Elmer has continuously volunteered to help and/or take the lead with complex issues and special projects. He has effectively worked to standardize and increase the robustness of the storage, server and data backup infrastructures. Elmer has been successful doing this by keeping abreast of new technologies that will improve overall administrative efficiencies in these areas.

Elmer constantly maintains a high degree of professional participation and provides subordinates with definite, positive assistance as needed. He communicates well with customers and follows up throughout the service request process. Internal units have learned that Elmer has assumed a 'go-to' guy role within the department as he can be relied upon to successfully do the job and any other tasks.



**Mary Jane Walker-Coleman, Social Services Practitioner  
Children and Family Services (CFS)**

Mary Jane started with Children and Family Services (CFS) in 2005 as an Intake Social Services Practitioner (SSP) in the Victorville office. Since she started with the department, Mary Jane has shown her dedication to child safety, strengthening families, and helping her co-workers by her flexibility and willingness to do whatever is needed to get the job done. She is willing to take special assignments, extra days of duty, accompany her co-workers when they need it, and help new social workers learn how to



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organize and prioritize their work. In the past few years, Mary Jane has participated in both the Evaluate Out (EVO) pilot, designed to assess and service low-risk referrals quickly through research and phone calls, and the Jurisdictional/Dispositional (JD) pilot, designed to alleviate some report writing duties for social workers responding to suspected child abuse referrals. Both pilots have expanded department wide, and we are very grateful for her contribution.

Mary Jane is married and has four adult children. She enjoys traveling, getting together with family and friends, and her flex Friday is her "spa day." Mary Jane's first career was in nursing, then she owned a restaurant and catering business while she raised her children prior to becoming a social worker.

Thank you, Mary Jane. We appreciate you!



**Darrin Kearney, Program Specialist I  
Transitional Assistance Department (TAD)**

Darrin is a 20 year employee who has quietly, steadily and dependably provided great service to the Transitional Assistance Department (TAD). As the assistant to the Regional Program Manager (RPM) he managed many processes and procedures seamlessly when the RPM was not available. Darrin has volunteered to be the lead for Workforce Management at the Customer Service Center. He is a resource to Admin whenever they need quick statistics on calls. He continues to have great partnerships with ITSD and C-IV which helps to get the work completed. He is always available, and is always looking for ways to assist staff with their work, and make things easier for staff and management.

Darrin would be a great employee to spotlight, as few may know him and could learn about what he does for the department and how important the behind the scenes staff are to the success of TAD.



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**Shanell Payne, Office Assistant III  
Veterans Affairs (VA)**

Shanell has been a County employee for 15 years, starting with the Sheriff's Department and then transferring to Veterans Affairs (VA) in 2000. Shanell is a key staff member who helps the department run smoothly and efficiently. She interacts with veterans and their families every day, helping them at the reception counter and on the phone. Shanell works closely with the Veteran Services Representatives, providing initial client needs assessments and data entry support.

Being highly proficient at her job, Shanell is the department's "go to" person for training newly-hired Office Assistants. She also trains Work Experience (WEX) employees at the San Bernardino office. On a personal note, Shanell is a delight to work with. She is a pleasant and easy-going person who is always ready to help her co-workers in any way she can. Shanell is also the unofficial social coordinator at the San Bernardino office, making sure special events do not go unobserved. She is gifted at making newcomers feel welcome, and giving those leaving a warm send-off. Shanell understands the importance of the Countywide Vision Statement and VA is fortunate to have her.



**Edward Amaya, Administrative Supervisor I  
Preschool Services Department (PSD)**

Eddie returned to the Preschool Services Department (PSD) after spending almost a year serving overseas in the military. Since he has returned, he has gone above and beyond his everyday job description. He is a strong supporter of all PSD's programs and activities. Eddie even takes part in connecting with legislators and new laws that affect Head Start's funding and future trends. He is all about success for our department and the children and families we serve.

Eddie's high level of productivity has been observed as he took the lead in re-establishing the department's Quality Assurance/Monitoring unit. Due to his commitment, PSD's federal review was successful. He keeps management well-informed of compliance policies and concerns with an open dialog way of communicating. He effectively demonstrates a systematic approach while carrying out projects, yet is open to new ideas. Eddie challenges his staff to take the initiative to improve quality



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assurance for the agency. Currently, he has been assigned to assist the department's finance unit and he has taken on the new task in a professional and willing manner. He has an array of knowledge and is an asset to the department.



**LuCinda Larson, Appeals Specialist**  
**Program Integrity Division (PID)**

LuCinda has been employed with the County since 1981, and with the Appeals Unit since 1996. She started an Office Assistant (OA) I Trainee and promoted to OA I and then to OA II. She further promoted to Eligibility Worker (EW) and EW Supervisor and finally to Appeals Specialist within the Program Integrity Division (PID). Currently, she is an acting Appeals Supervisor. LuCinda is always willing to accept a new project or assignment; this year she volunteered and was assigned Administrative Disqualification Hearings and has been instrumental in disqualifying 135 recipients who misused CalWORKs and/or CalFresh benefits. LuCinda is efficient, accurate and thorough in her work. She willingly shares her experience and resources with employees and readily assists in the training of new staff. She routinely initiates assisting other staff as well as promotes positive improvement to unit practices. It is an honor to select her as the Human Services Employee of the Month.



**Patty Carson, Program Specialist I**  
**Program Development Division (PDD)**

Patty demonstrates the Countywide Vision and Program Development Division (PDD) values in all aspects of her job as a Program Specialist I. She goes "above and beyond" at all times, provides excellent customer service, and assists whenever and wherever she is able. Patty supports the Transitional Assistance Department (TAD) CalWORKs program, analyzing state regulations and developing County policy material for administration of the program. She recently helped initiate Tribal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) in the County and was instrumental in the County's application for and receipt of funds for a CalWORKs Housing Support Program, to be implemented in January 2015. Both projects involved teaming up with outside agencies as well as various inter-county departments. Patty participates in the County Welfare Directors Association (CWDA) CalWORKs County Advisory Team (CAT).



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Patty has worked for PDD since December of 2010, in the CalFresh and CalWORKs programs, and has been a County employee since May of 1999, with prior experience in TAD as an Office Assistant (OA), Eligibility Worker (EW) and Supervisor (EWS I), and a Corrective Action Supervisor (CAS). She is hard working and dedicated with a positive attitude. Patty recently traveled to Missouri for her daughter's wedding, and is excited and happy for her!



**Denise McKinney, Office Assistant III  
Children's Network (CN)**

Ms. McKinney has been employed with the County for ten years. She spent her first year as a Sheriff Records Clerk before promoting and joining the small staff at Children's Network (CN). As an Office Assistant III, she is assigned to assist primarily with the Coalition Against Sexual Exploitation (CASE) and Mentoring Youth Taskforce, but Denise is always willing to help in all areas. Her job duties include attending and taking excellent minutes at a variety of meetings, preparing minutes for distribution, providing excellent customer service, ordering all necessary supplies, assisting in the preparation of various events CN hosts, and keeping accurate records and logs. Denise has an eye for design and her graphic abilities has led to the creation of dynamic and eye-catching brochures, posters, billboards, and flyers for the CN child safety campaigns.

Denise likes to spend her time cooking and baking and always shares her homemade items with CN staff. When she is not creating fabulous designs for our child safety campaigns or cooking delicious meals, Denise spends her time collecting vinyl records and vintage matchbooks, watching Colombo, and listening to Morrissey.



**Regina Cruise, Child Support Officer I  
Department of Child Support Services (DCSS)**

Regina has been with the department for 4 and a half years. As a member of the Intergovernmental Team, she is responsible for managing a high volume caseload that requires cooperation with other states and countries. Her positive attitude and attention to detail exemplifies her genuine care for the customer she serves.



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Regina is first to volunteer and always willing to assist. In her supervisor's absence, she chose to take a lead role on a reconciliation project that was coming due over the holidays. She distributed cases for review and used her upbeat demeanor to motivate her teammates, taking personal responsibility for the team's success in their endeavor. She has assisted as a potential witness in interstate telephonic hearings and is currently working with Attorney staff and another jurisdiction to secure a collection of over \$80,000.

Regina's attitude, care for those around her and desire to assist the public have an amazing effect on those with whom she interacts and makes her a great candidate for the HS Employee of the Month. She models not only the mission, vision and values of the department, but of Human Services and the County as well.



**Brenda Sala, Fiscal Specialist**  
**HS Auditing**

Brenda has been employed with the County since September 2000 and has dedicated all of her time working for Human Services. She is a lead worker for the Recovery Unit and is responsible for providing training and assistance to the Recovery team. Brenda is very knowledgeable on many programs and is the division's specialist on Tax Intercept. She applies her knowledge and skills to solve complex and difficult Tax Intercept situations.

Brenda is a member of the Leadership Development Network and serves as the Department Notary. She is always looking to learn a new skill. Recently, she worked on special projects providing assistance with the Time Study Audit and has represented HS Auditing on a State Review. Brenda does an excellent job in providing customer service and she is an all-around team player.



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**Jonathan Buffong, Crisis Intervention Training Coordinator  
Department of Behavioral Health (DBH)**

Jonathan has been an employee of the County since 2009 and has worked as a Community Liaison for the Department of Behavioral Health's (DBH) Prevention and Early Intervention program. He became the Crisis Intervention Training (CIT) Coordinator for the DBH Workforce Education and Training program.

Jonathan was nominated for the Human Services Employee of the Month by a Sheriff's Department detective because of his ability to foster positive relationships between the two departments. Jonathan serves as a committee member for the joint DBH and Sheriff's Department Crisis Intervention Committee. During the March committee meeting, members suggested that presentations from the Coalition Against Sexual Exploitation (CASE) and the Sheriff's Department's Project Hope be included in future CIT training for newly hired Sheriffs. He accepted the challenge and with only two day's notice before the next 32-hour CIT course, Jonathan successfully coordinated with DBH and Sheriff's personnel to give the presentations. The presentations were well received by the deputies, as well as the CIT training staff. Jonathan can always be counted on to ensure training is top notch. His commitment to service, customer service, and professionalism are a positive reflection of DBH and reflective of the Countywide Vision.



**Karol Hamman, Staff Analyst II  
Administrative Services Division (ASD)**

Karol's thoroughness and dedication to her craft are impressive to watch. In her 25 years with Human Services (HS), she has supported several departments and divisions. She became a Staff Analyst II on the Special Projects Team at the HS Administrative Support Division in 2007. In Special Projects, Karol is responsible to review grant opportunities, coordinate submissions and author/review agenda items for the receipt of funding awards on behalf of HS departments. Her work includes ensuring that final applications are consistent throughout the often massive submissions and her meticulous work has assisted in bringing millions of grant dollars to HS departments. Karol's expert guidance on the submission of successful grant opportunities is a highly sought-after and respected resource from within HS departments. In addition to her strong grasp of granting complexities and many other projects and duties, she also



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manages the Leaders in Action (LIA) program matching mentors and mentees for HS staff interested in future management careers.

Karol's work parallels the Countywide Vision by supporting the successful pursuit of funding which creates a sustainable system of high-quality services for residents to achieve well-being and prosper.



**David Harnden Jr., Office Assistant II**  
**Performance, Education & Resource Centers (PERC)**

David has been with the County for 17 years. In January of 2013, he came to the Performance, Education & Resource Centers (PERC) and has been an asset with his commitment to customer service. David is self motivating and demonstrates a pleasant, helping attitude at all times. He has taken on many roles at PERC and has provided support for a variety of programs; Transitional Assistance Department Orientation & Induction, Management & Leadership Academy (MLA), New Employee Orientation (NEO) ambassador for all new County employees and Adobe Connect facilitator. He has become PERC's expert Adobe Connect facilitator and knowing the team desired separate layouts, he took it upon himself to convert each PowerPoint slide into a photo, saving time waiting for uploads during online webinars.

David extends his skills and knowledge coaching/mentoring new staff with patience and understanding. He also is an encouraging and innovative wellness advocate and Biggest Loser Club leader. David always has the best interest of his team, PERC, and the County in mind.



**Leslie Dunn, Staff Analyst II**  
**Department of Aging and Adult Services (DAAS)**

Leslie has worked for the County since 1996 and is currently a Staff Analyst II with the Department of Aging and Adult Services. Leslie's primary responsibilities are the contracting, monitoring, and support of the department's Elderly Nutrition Program providers, who provide meals to eligible seniors throughout the County.

Leslie's work ethic is beyond reproach. She never considers a project to be complete until it meets her second-to-none standards. Throughout her career, Leslie has proven herself to be very conscientious about her work and provides outstanding customer service. In the last year, as a result of budget cuts



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and staff retirements, Leslie has cheerfully accepted a significant amount of new responsibilities as the department's Area Planner. She was very instrumental in providing support and assistance to the department's nutrition providers when two of the largest were forced to stop providing services.

Leslie is a superlative example of customer service, positive attitude, and quality work. She truly makes the department shine.