

# The Condition of Probation

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## "Girls Stepping Up for Change" Hits the Road

By Kevin Lynch

The juvenile justice system has often been very concerned about telling youth all of the things they cannot do: "Do not use drugs and alcohol, do not associate with gang members, do not violate curfew, etc." The Girls Stepping Up for Change (GSUFC) program is an example of how our Department is encouraging youth to be aware of the positive, healthy, and legal things they can do. Jeana Reynolds, MFT, Mental Health Unit Supervisor, Angela Arenas, MFT, Mental Health Practitioner, and Michele Boyer, recently retired Probation Supervisor, have worked with a group of at-risk girls for six years now, providing them with



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## Chief's Corner - Organizational Development - a Path of Continuous Improvement

By Michael Daly

This year's Organizational Development (OD) was truly exceptional. The Management Team allowed for a grass roots effort led by line staff to dictate the issues to be examined and discussed, for two reasons. First, the three topics selected for discussion were Leadership, Staff Development and Accountability. Personally, I could not be happier with those three areas and could not wait to start. Secondly, it was a great process and a belief in "trusting the process" in which line staff came up with these three subjects to explore.

We also interviewed and brought in a facilitator for our OD work. Her name is Madelyn Mackie and she has turned out to fit perfectly into our culture. It was beautiful to watch her extract comments, thoughts, theories and challenge

staff. She would then put all of that information into an understandable analysis. That would then engage round two of more analysis and great dialogue. She was masterful.

The three topics chosen are very important and necessary for a successful organization. The topic of Leadership was discussed and we all really wanted to know what that meant specifically to our organization and what is expected. Here is what our staff came up with that will carry is into our future.

*In the Marin County Probation Department, everyone has the potential to be a leader.*

*It is an expectation that all staff demonstrate leadership.*

**Definition of Leadership**

*In the Marin County Probation Department, Leadership is Servant Leadership; Inspiring, Influencing, and Championing Others; Holding Myself and Others Accountable; Trust and Honesty;*

The next topic examined was Staff Development. This had a direct correlation to our commitment to evaluating 100% of our employees and having a coaching culture that really helps our employees manage their careers, meet their personal and professional goals and better themselves so they can better serve our public. The product of the Staff Development included an updated Policy and Procedure on what coaching is, expectations of what is to occur during a coaching meeting with your supervisor and a new template to track all coaching meet-

### Mission Statement

*The mission of the Marin County Probation Department is to further justice and community safety, and to hold offenders accountable while promoting their rehabilitation.*

## Continuing Care Reform Conference

By Sandra Mancilla

On June 12, 2017, the Chief Probation Officers of California (CPOC) put on the First Annual Continuum of Care Reform Conference in Sacramento in order to provide additional guidance to probation departments and their partners in implementing Assembly Bill 403. Assembly Member Mark Stone, who authored the bill, spoke about what led to the reform and outlined targeted outcomes.

AB 403 went into effect on January 1, 2017 and was designed in order to improve outcomes for youth placed in foster care. Probation youth are disproportionately placed in group homes by comparison to youth in foster care through a child welfare agency. One of the fundamental principles of the bill intends for foster care youth to be placed in home-like settings closer to their families for a short period of time with appropriate rehabilitative services. Enter MY Home, which opened its doors in August 2015. To add some perspective on how prepared Marin County has been in antici-

pation of AB 403, MY Home continues to be the only program of its kind in the state operated in collaboration with a probation department.

Deputy Probation Officers Yuliana Valenzuela and Sandra Mancilla, along with Seneca staff, presented at the "Innovating Foster Parent Recruitment Strategies" breakout session on the MY Home model. As a team, we provided information on the funding sources and roles of the "wraparound" team members. We explained the benefits and challenges of this program along with some of our experiences.

While one of the MY Home Resource Parents, Rachel Smith, was supposed to present with us, CPOC asked her to speak at the plenary session for the entire audience. Rachel shared the stage with two former foster care youth. The youth shared their personal, candid experiences about the benefits and drawbacks of group home settings. Rachel provided contrast as she explained her experience as a resource parent, highlighting the benefits of local, short-term place-



ment.

While AB 403 includes exciting and promising initiatives, agencies are facing challenges. One of our Department's challenges is expanding the MY Home program by recruiting more resource parents. Although a MY Home 2 opened up last fall, the resource parents will not be renewing their commitment. If you, or anyone you know, has ever considered this calling, we need you now. Please get in contact with Director Kevin Lynch at 415-473-6620 or Seneca's foster care line at 877-380-5300.

## Chief's Corner (from pg. 1)...

By Michael Daly

ings which will occur on a quarterly basis.

The first two subjects of Leadership and Staff Development were discussed, committees worked hard to present their findings and were finalized.

The last subject proved to be more challenging and will take a cultural shift with built in accountability for it to be considered "done." Staff Accountability is a wide ranging topic that had great and lively discussion. We did finalize a document that everyone really appreciate.

### **Definition of Accountability**

"Accountability is holding oneself and others to the defined measures of excellence in the Marin County Probation Department which include the Mission Statement, the Core Values, and other defined standards of performance. Every employee will be held equally re-

sponsible to the same level of ethics, integrity, and work production in a trusting, respectful, and safe environment."

### **Accountability in Action**

In the Marin County Probation Department:

--I know my purpose and expectations as they relate to the Probation Department Mission Statement, Core Values, and Performance Standards.

--I have a vested interest to support the growth and success of the department.

--I recognize my sphere of influence and concerns and will always take into consideration how an action has a direct impact on myself, my peers, our clients, and the department.

--I will assume positive intent and believe that actions were not done with the purpose to harm, hurt, or have a negative impact.

--I will clarify information, obtain the facts, and seek to understand and comprehend.

--I will meet individually with my peers, my manager, supervisors, and senior leadership to discuss situations with respect, kindness, and professionalism.

--I will actively listen.

--I will celebrate our differences.

--I will seek solutions

And I will ensure that I am always acting and adhering to the personal and professional standards of excellence in all my actions and behaviors.

A lot of the accountability action items will take practice by everyone in the Department. It will be nice to have a "blueprint" to go back to when things happen that require explanation and processing. I can't thank the staff enough for their openness to discussing these subjects. These three subjects will make us a stronger and more efficient department. I look forward to nurturing this process for years to come.



## Vacation Photos



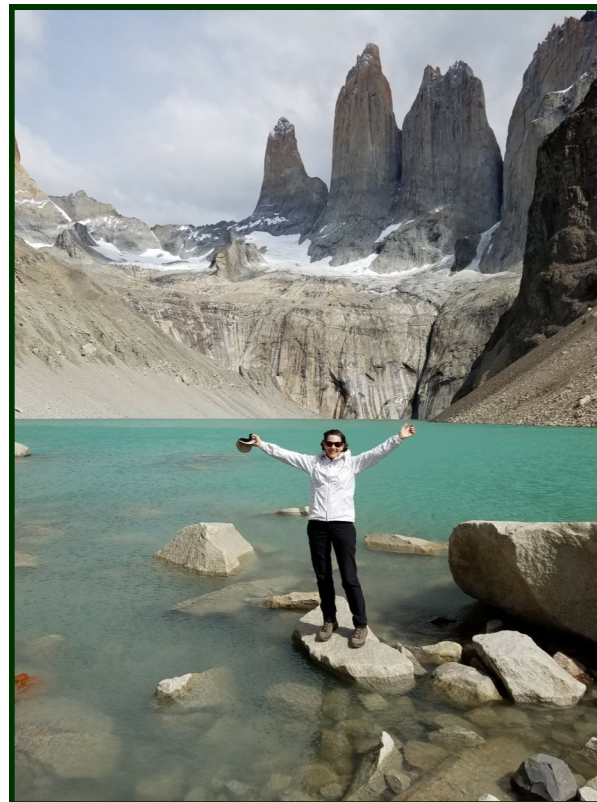
Rocky Mountain National Park, Colorado.  
Brad Watson (JCO) and his family.



Anthony went on a winter trip with his wife, Katherine, to Truckee/Donner Lake for some cold weather and snowboarding.



Jasmin A. (dad taking the picture) at Baseball for All tournament in Rockford IL with Ila Borders, first female to get a scholarship to play men's collegiate baseball.



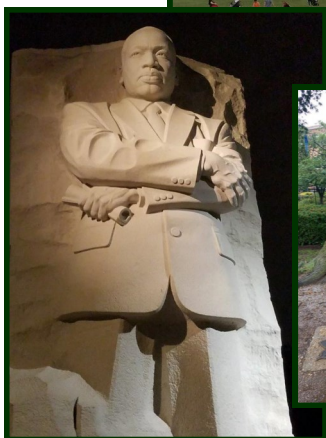
Linda Smith and her husband went to Patagonia in February to celebrate a "significant decade" birthday for Linda. This is in the Torres del Paine National Park at the Paine Massif Towers – long hike up, but worth the effort.

## Vacation Photos



Liv Lauchenauer and her family cruised around Crater Lake National Park this summer, still a lot of snow on the ground.

Victoria McIntosh and her husband visited his family's campground, Parks Pond Campground in Clifton, Maine



While in Washington DC Carmen Vance visited the Lincoln Memorial, the US Capital, her sorority at Howard University, est 1908, and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. lit up at night.

Michele Boyer and her daughter hiking in the Italian Dolomites





## **“Girls Stepping up for Change” Hits the Road (from pg. 1)...**

exposure to a variety of activities and opportunities through a weekly group that convenes normally at the Juvenile Services Center. Perhaps the best example of this concept has been demonstrated by a recent trip some members of GSUFC took far away from our office.

In collaboration with Canal Welcome Center and Big City Mountaineers, GSUFC recently completed a six-day backpacking trip through Yosemite National Park. A group of six young girls, along with four adult women guides (two of whom were Michele and Angela, and two professional guides from Big City Mountaineers), had the experience of a lifetime hiking in the backcountry. The group had trained for this over the preceding months, getting themselves in both physical and mental shape for the challenge. None of the six girls had ever done anything remotely like this, and there were some of us who wondered how this trip would work out. It worked out ....GREAT!

Angela Arenas wrote this after the group returned from their trip:

“The girls were beyond outstanding and Michele and I could not be more proud of their accomplishments. I believe they do not even realize what they did because they just kept moving and taking charge of the entire trip without much complaining. We carried 40-pound backpacks with all of our food in bear canisters (each girl had one in their bag), our tents, pads, rain gear, clothes and personal kits. We set up camp in a different location every day, hit almost 100 degrees some days and climbed 2,000 feet on our first ascent.”

Canal Welcome Center, a key partner for our Juvenile Division in working with Latino youth on probation, blazed the path for this trip by forging a relationship with Big City Mountaineers (<http://www.bigcitymountaineers.org/about/>), an outdoor program specializing in serving under-resourced youth. Canal Welcome Center has collaborated with Big City Mountaineers in conducting several suc-

cessful backpacking trips for youth over the last few years, and the GSUFC group decided they wanted to try it. Given how successful this trip was, my guess is that this will become an annual event for GSUFC.

I am very proud of our Department for being willing to support such a bold event. I am also pleased with Michele and Angela of the GSUFC staff, as they assumed a big risk themselves by agreeing to go backpacking in the wilderness with a group of novices. However, I am most impressed with the group of six girls who experienced not only the joy of the outdoors, but also the pleasure and sense of accomplishment in completing a daunting challenge. While I completely understand why our system has to tell youth many of the things they cannot do, I am very happy that we can provide them with healthy alternatives like this event.

## **Mike Ertz**

**By Kevin Lynch**



in San Rafael. Mike was a hard worker who was also thoughtful, considerate, passionate, collaborative, funny, friendly, interesting ... and well-loved by his family, colleagues, co-workers, and clients.

In honor of Mike, his work and the great esteem that so many people had for him, our Department has placed a bench at our Juvenile Services Center garden. We hope that this will serve as a reminder of all that Mike accomplished while working for our Department, and what he meant to many of us. Mike leaves behind his wife, Amira, and nine year old daughter Anaya,



It is with a heavy heart that I write to inform those of you who did not already know that Mike Ertz passed away unexpectedly in May of this year. Mike was a Mental Health Practitioner in the PORTAL program since its inception in 2007. He was a Probation Department employee who was co-located at Marin's Community School, the County Office of Education's continuation school program

Amira and Anaya sitting on the bench dedicated to Mike. ↑

## Identity Workgroup

By Kevin Lynch

For decades, the practice in our office has been to simply transpose the identifying information for a child referred for a law violation from the police report to our records. That means that if a police report states “15-year old Hispanic boy” chances are very good that this is what we will record the child as, and we will never question or re-assess that description. By never providing an opportunity to the family of the child to tell us how they self-identify, we are missing an opportunity to better determine a case plan that will be helpful in deterring the child from future delinquency. This is even more paramount in an era of increased diversity in our community, including race, ethnicity, gender, and sexual orientation.

The need to review how we assess youth for appropriate services came to me after I was made aware of a series of anecdotes in our work that cried out to be addressed. The best one was from a Deputy Probation Officer who told me about a young person who said this to him:

“I don’t appreciate how you talk about me in the reports to the Court. You keep saying “she” when you refer to me, and that is not who I am.”

This young person identifies as transgender, and has the wherewithal, and a strong sense of their own identity, to tell us that. What about the other youth in our system who are not so confident, either of their identity or of our ability to respond appropriately once they disclose this information?

However, it is not just in our office where this issue of increasing diversity is becoming apparent. A recent survey

found that 12% of Millennials identify as transgender or gender non-conforming, meaning they do not identify with the sex they were assigned at birth or their gender expression is different from conventional expectations of masculinity and femininity. That’s twice the amount reported by Generation X (6%).

This issue is relevant not only to gender identity and sexual orientation, but also to race and ethnicity. Youth of color are over-represented in our system, and it is incumbent that we create a partnership with the families we serve in order to be successful in diverting them from delinquency. One way to establish that is to engage with youth and families and ask them questions about how they see themselves; getting that kind of information will go a long way in helping us develop services that will be appropriate and effective.

In order to begin to address this major issue, the Juvenile Division created a workgroup to discuss the topic. We came up with a manifesto of sorts that acts as our guide in terms of what we are trying to accomplish:

*The Juvenile Division of the Marin County Probation Department is committed to ensuring we provide services that are relevant, culturally sensitive and accessible to all youth and families referred to us. It has become clear over the last 5-10 years that the population we serve has become increasingly diverse in terms of race, ethnicity, gender, and sexual orientation. It is incumbent on our organization to do all we can to be cognizant of both the needs of these diverse populations, and the ways in which our system, pro-*

*cesses, and procedures may impact our effectiveness working with them. In order to do so, we will:*

*Increase our awareness of, and sensitivity to, issues of identity involving race, ethnicity, gender, and sexual orientation*

*Consider the need for changes to our procedures around intake and assessment necessary to ensure our services are inclusive and effective*

We have already begun taking steps, as several staff participated in a training from Dr. Jei Africa on the topic of “Creating Inclusive and Responsive Care for LGBTQ+ Individuals.” This is just one example of the type of work our system needs to undertake in order to accomplish what we have stated above.

What had started as an internal conversation within the Juvenile Division has now expanded to all three Divisions of the Department and to include staff from Health and Human Services (as they are embarking on a similar review of this issue). The workgroup still has plenty left to do to, including developing other training opportunities on the issue, discussing ways to ensure we explore identity with the youth and families we serve, and creating a system that is both friendly and effective with the diverse populations we encounter in our work. While the challenge of doing all of these things is daunting, I am more convinced than ever that it is the right thing to do. I look forward to reporting out in a future edition of The Condition of Probation what our workgroup comes up with to adjust to our changing community.



## **Team of the Quarter**

**By Kevin Lynch**



The Placement Unit of the Juvenile Division was awarded “Team of the Quarter” honors this month. Pictured below (left to right) are Deputy Probation Officers Yuliana Valenzuela and David Fahy, Probation Supervisor Selina Johnson, Legal Process Specialist Martha Grigsby, Deputy Probation Officer Sandra Mancilla and Public Health Nurse Nita Lagleva-Gibson (not pictured but part of the team is Mental Health Practitioner Angela Arenas).

This group of staff has worked diligently to meet the needs of foster care youth and their families. This has been particularly challenging in the era of

“continuing care reform,” as the State is significantly changing how foster care youth are provided care. The award was well-deserved but also somewhat bittersweet. David Fahy left his position with the Unit several months ago for a transfer to the Adult Division, and Nita Lagleva-Gibson has announced she is leaving the County for another employment opportunity.

On the positive side, the recognition event was very successful. As always, Probation Department staff came out in force to support their co-workers, including a large contingent of staff

from the Adult Division. It is gratifying to see how staff support one another, regardless of their assignments. However, the most impressive part of it was Yuliana taking to the microphone and doing a brief presentation on the need for increasing the pool of foster parents. It is not easy to stand up in front of a group of strangers, in a setting you are not accustomed to being in, and giving a talk like this. Yuliana absolutely crushed it though; she is committed to taking advantage of opportunities like this to develop her skills, and it is great to have staff like her be so committed to our Chief’s mantra of “continuous improvement.”





## **Today's Draw: Leonel Ceja**

**By My Tran**

Leonel Ceja is the lucky employee being featured in this quarterly newsletter. Leo was born in Wenatchee, Washington and spent most of his childhood in Santa Rosa, CA. Leo is a guy with all trades. He worked as a poker dealer and game table dealer at a local casino to help pay his way through college.

Leo attended Santa Rosa Junior College and received his Bachelor's in Spanish and a minor in Psychology from Sonoma State University. He began his career with Probation work as a Probation Assistant for Sonoma County Probation. He worked at the Day Reporting Center working with the AB109 offenders by facilitating Cognitive Behavioral Intervention groups.

In 2016, he joined the Marin County Probation Department as a Deputy Probation Officer in the Juvenile Supervision Unit. He enjoys his role as Probation Officer especially when he works with new immigrant juveniles or with children who were first born citizens. He feels a special connection with these youths and their family because



of his similar background. Leo is interested in taking on more difficult assignments within his future in the Probation Department.

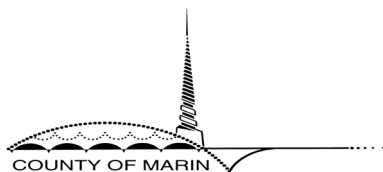
On his downtime, he finds leisure going fishing, camping, spending time

with family, and experiencing outdoor activities. He loves the outdoors. Leonel is very helpful and always offers a hand to help his coworkers. He is a wonderful addition to our Probation family.

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### ***The Condition of Probation***

#### ***Marin County Probation Department Newsletter Editorial Policy***

*The Condition of Probation* is published quarterly by the Marin County Probation Department. The purpose of this newsletter is to provide a forum for communication and the sharing of information. *The Condition of Probation* publishes articles and information related to Mission and Departmental operations & activity. Articles submitted may be edited for content, clarity, or length.

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Michael Daly, Kevin Lynch, Liv Lauchenauer, Alisha Krupinsky, Lyndsey MacQuarrie, and Sandra Mancilla