



COUNTY OF MONTEREY CAO Weekly Report

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Inmates listen to encouraging remarks from Programs Manager Charles DaSilva before meeting with potential employers at a job fair held in the Monterey County Jail.

County Notes

- > Interested in learning more about the Sheriff's Office? The next in a [series of Town Hall meetings](#) is February 25th in King City.

Fair Brings Job Opportunities to Jail Inmates

Job Fairs are a popular way to search for jobs or investigate new careers. Those opportunities are even more precious if you are an inmate in the county jail and trying to determine how you will make a living once out of jail.

For inmates in the Monterey County Jail, the job fair came to them last month, thanks to a collaboration between the Sheriff's Office, Probation and GEO Reentry Services. More than 60 inmates attended and all were able to meet with a variety of potential employers.



A job fair participant tells a reporter about his job search and his hopes for life after time in jail.

“Events like these are more than just an opportunity for individuals to secure employment,” explains Luke Lynch, GEO Reentry Services Program Manager. “They give individuals an opportunity to improve their attitude and belief system, strengthen their values and begin to develop positive, prosocial relationships with people who will be able to assist them within the community upon release.”

And there was no shortage of potential employers who were on hand to talk with inmates and tell them about potential jobs. Lynch says there are many local employers and providers who have been working with individuals with criminal backgrounds for some time, such as Turning Point, Labor Ready and Monterey County Child Support Services. Additionally, several local restaurant owners participated and have job opportunities.

“If offenders can find employment upon release from custody, they are much less likely to reoffend,” says Probation Chief Marcia Parsons, who hopes to see more job fairs in the future. “We strive to find opportunities for

productive, prosocial activities which, in turn, result in stability and feelings of success and self-worth in our probationers.”

Programs Sergeant Sally Pritchett says there will be more job fairs at the jail, which already offers educational, vocational, drug and alcohol programs for inmates. She says the success of the fair can be measured not only by inmates receiving jobs once ‘outside,’ but by the immediate effects the activity had on participants.

“It may take time to measure hard data to link inmates with jobs they connected with here, but that is only one dimension of success,” Pritchett says. “Success can also be measured from the feedback we have received from the inmates who attended. The event gave hope as well as an opportunity to be treated like a human being, not just a number. Talking to the employers contributed to their confidence, their self-worth and gave some of these individuals direction and a positive area to focus on as they transition from ‘in-custody’ to reentering the community.”



Inmates line up to talk to potential employers.

Child Support Services ‘Ring the Bell’

Monterey County’s Child Support Services (CSS) has consistent high rankings for the amount of child support it collects on behalf of local children and families. Sometimes, getting those funds takes a major effort and some ingenuity.

The Department celebrates support collections of more than \$5,000 with program called “Ring the Bell,” which shares these amazing results and lets those staff persons ring a bell! Here are a few of CSS’s most recent high-dollar collections and how they came about.

- **Who do you Trust?**

When a custodial parent mentioned to Child Support Officer Bertie Simon-Rich that the non-custodial parent’s father had a trust in Monterey County, Bertie worked with Child Support Attorney Victoria Davis to prepare a lien on that trust. After an accounting hearing was held to disburse the funds, the non-custodial parent paid off support he owed: \$47,957.

- **‘Retiring’ the Debt**

A non-custodial parent asked to decrease the percentage taken from his disability payments. Child Support Officer Annette Hernandez recalled prior conversations where this same person referenced loans he had taken from his retirement account, so instead of reducing his payment, Annette issued a request to the employer for retirement information and referred the case to Lead Child Support Officer Dawn Scavo for a Qualified Domestic Relations Order (QDRO), which allows the custodial parent to receive support moneys from the non-custodial parent’s retirement plan. A subpoena was issued and full payment was received: \$29,036.

- **Don’t Settle for Less**

Child Support Officer Annette Hernandez got a call from a non-custodial parent saying he made an offer to the custodial parent to settle his owed support payments for \$10,000. The actual amount owed was more than twice that amount. Supervising Child Support Officer Dawn Yonemitsu reviewed the case and issued a Qualified Domestic Relations Order (QDRO) to the non-custodial parent’s employer. The results? Payment was received in the amount of \$27,964, instead of the original amount offered.

- **Payment Provides a Home**

After consistent contact and numerous conversations with a non-custodial parent about his outstanding support payments, Child Support Officer Lawrence Zenk saw success. The non-custodial parent obtained a loan to pay his arrears of \$24,450. That alone would make this a happy ending, but when Lawrence notified the custodial parent, she explained that she and her children had not been able to have a permanent home, and that this overdue income would now make that possible.

Health Department Steps Up with ‘Socks for Soles’ Project

What started out as a holiday effort to collect a little-thought of item for area homeless and those in need outlasted the holidays and has gone on to produce some amazing results.



This vacant workstation turned into ‘Sock Central’ during the Socks for Soles effort.

The effort is “Socks for Soles,” collecting socks in all sizes for area shelters and organization that help those in need. Word went out in mid-December about the project, and collection continued throughout the holidays and New Year. Socks for Soles definitely resonated with Health Department staff and others since, at final count, the drive collected 2,027 pairs of socks by end of January.

Kymm Navarrette coordinated the effort and says the enthusiastic response is just part of the Health Department culture.

“I received a very warm response, 27 people stepped up to be ‘sock captains’ and helped collect socks in virtually every part of our department,” says Navarrette. “It was fun and easy. My hope is that it will inspire other departments to think of small but ‘big’ ideas.”

Navarrette says other departments heard about the collection and joined in - she gives a shout out to Probation employees who donated over 200 pair of socks to the cause.

For those who donated, here is where your socks are being distributed:

- Salinas Warming Shelter
- Veterans Transition Center of Monterey County
- Dorothy’s Place
- Pajaro Rescue Mission in Watsonville
- Grace Harbor Shelters Epicenter Program
- Shelter Outreach Plus
- Salvation Army
- Victory Mission
- Salinas Community Human Services
- Sun Street Center
- Pueblo Del Mar
- Family Units Natividad Medical Center

Local Board and Care homes

Navarrette says while there are dozens of people to thank, she singles out staffers Jeffrey Domalanta who helped her take all those socks at their final destinations and Susie McKee who separated and counted them all. With the success of Sock for Soles, she is ready to try something else.

“I can’t wait to start on our next endeavor, we are thinking new children’s book donations. Who knows?”