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Library Assistant Named Paralibrarian of the Year

A Paralibrarian is a member of the library support staff, and you’ll be happy to know that our Monterey County Free Libraries is home to the Paralibrarian of the Year for 2018, Orquidea Olvera.

Olvera was selected from candidates submitted from throughout the country to the Library Journal, the premiere library professional magazine which holds the competition each year.
To put this award in perspective, there are more libraries than Starbucks or McDonalds in the United States and every single one has paralibrarians. This is a national award, and includes an article featuring Olvera in the Journal’s March edition.

“Orquidea’s dedication and hard work, her commitment to the children we reach through Reading Safari, STREAM (Science Technology Reading Engineering Agriculture & Math) and all her outreach work make a huge difference to our community,” says Library Director Jayanti Addleman.

Olvera has worked for MCFL for ten years. Her main responsibility is Early Literacy Mobile Outreach, which brings literacy and science literacy programs to 18 different preschool classes each month throughout Monterey County. The programs include story time, songs, learning activities, games, science experiments, crafts and checking out a library book. Last year she drove over 4,000 miles to serve almost 400 children, circulating around 2,200 books and giving away over 1,600 incentive books to children to start home libraries.

But her work doesn’t stop there. She participates in community outreach, bringing the bookmobile to local events, helps residents use library computers to sign up for housing vouchers as part of library collaboration with the Housing Authority and last year she helped create the Summer Science Extravaganza.

“I am humbled and grateful for this award, but also for being part of a team of people who love to serve its communities. Working for the libraries has been one of the most rewarding jobs I have ever had,” says Olvera. “To the staff behind the scene who process all of the books I share in our mini-bookmobile; to those who place the supply orders, who never say no even when they are at their busiest; to my supervisors and our library director who are always looking for grants, donations, resources and opportunities to bring wonderful programs to our community, although it's my name on that cover, this award would not be possible without the team that is Monterey County Free Libraries.”

STRYVE Efforts Shared Nationally

In 2011, the Health Department received a STRYVE (Striving to Reduce Youth Violence Everywhere) grant from the Centers for Disease Control to help address youth violence in Monterey County and the City of Salinas.
The County’s STRYVE program efforts in youth violence reduction are now featured on a national website geared for health professionals to share their projects and success stories.

NACCHO’s (National Association of County & City Health Officials) website has a section called “Stories from the Field,” where local health professionals can share their experiences and demonstrate the value of public health.

Senior Health Educator Linda McGlone, who oversees the STRYVE program, submitted an article, “Responding to Youth Violence as a Public Health Problem,” about STRYVE’s work and background in Monterey County and the changes in youth crime since STRYVE joined joint agency efforts in this area.

Her article tells the idea behind bringing STRYVE to the County, which was to take a public health approach to the community’s skyrocketing youth crime rate. Over the last seven years, the program has become an integral part of the effort. McGlone joined key groups working on the issue and began the public health approach by helping update the city’s comprehensive strategic plan using the health department’s skills in data analysis and strategic planning. The next step was to select strategies based on risk and protective factors related to youth violence. McGlone shared how the program was able to become an integral part of violence reduction so that other communities could implement their own efforts if desired.

You can read the Monterey County STRYVE story [here](#).

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**Health Promotion Workshop Offers Mindfulness Meditation**

Stress seems to be a part of all of our lives and most of us welcome tips and techniques to handle it.

The Health Promotion Partnership staff is bringing back mediation as part of its wellness workshops series. This month, a session of Mindfulness Mediation for Stress Reduction was held at the Monterey County Courthouse in Monterey.
Mindful meditation is a technique known to help reduce stress and stress-related symptoms. It doesn’t require any special equipment to do. The workshop had participants just using available chairs for a ‘guided, seated meditation.’

The session was led by Eva Giedt, a local, licensed psychotherapist. She guided participants through techniques to both relax and learn to focus their mind on their present surroundings, which is a core value of this technique.

“We have held several mindfulness courses in the past and it’s re-emerging in our program offerings due to its popularity,” says Melissa Pouch, Senior Health Educator. “We use staff feedback to help guide our programs and our annual survey showed there was high interest in stress-related workshops and opportunities. These classes allow participants to focus on the present moment, disregarding the stress and worry of their work and personal lives to take an hour to focus on themselves.”

If you missed out on it, organizers say while this was the only session currently planned, we can look forward to more meditation workshops in the coming months.