Dressed to clean! Health Department staff members show they have the ‘right stuff’ for an Earth Day cleanup in Salinas.

County Earth Day Efforts

How did you celebrate Earth Day this year? The County both gave and received help to mark the occasion.

Among those giving - staff from the Health Department. Last Saturday, the Environmental Health Bureau organized a cleanup of the Natividad Creek/Car Lake area in conjunction with the Salinas Valley Solid Waste Authority and various volunteer teams. Participants included Director Elsa Jimenez, members of the Environmental Health, Public Health and Behavioral Health Bureaus, all working together to beautify this area. Great job!
County parks were on the receiving end of some hard work by volunteers.

Last week, employees from DaVita Kidney Care - Sierra Terrific Region 5 spent several hours sprucing up a walking path at Jacks Peak Park. DaVita encourages volunteering among its employees throughout the year and particularly around Earth Day. It was a lovely day to be at the park and the volunteers had a great time.
Many thanks to the members of Girl Scout Troop 33132 of Spreckels for volunteering this week at Toro Park in honor of Earth Day. Scouts fanned out throughout the lower area of the park, picking up litter and sorting it into trash and recycling. They did a wonderful job making this public area nice for all to enjoy.

There are many volunteer opportunities at our county parks. If you would like to take on a volunteer project or make arrangements for a group volunteer experience, contact the Parks Call Center at 755-4895 or email to parks@co.monterey.ca.us

Social Services Honors Staff, Youth at Work Participants

At its annual Employee Recognition Reception this week, the Department of Social Services (DSS) honored not only its staff, but youngsters participating in the Take Your Child to Work Day event, which the department has been participating in for the last 25 years.
61 youth and their parents were recognized for taking part in the program, which helps introduce children to their parent’s professions and spark interest in a career path. Department Director Elliott Robinson praised both parents and children for taking part, but he had a very special thank you – and some words of wisdom – for the young people gathered here, which you can find on the County Facebook page.

During the annual recognition ceremony, DSS staff were honored in specific categories for both individual and team awards. Recipients received certificates, goodie bags and were congratulated personally by Board of Supervisor members Luis Alejo, Simón Salinas and Mary Adams.
Here are this year’s winners. Congratulations to all!

**Customer Service:**
Garry L. Guerrero  
Victory Caravez  
Victor Flores  
Laura Stanton  
Jennifer Mitchell  
L. Patricia Orozco-Gonzalez

**Innovator**
Fawn Mackey  
Jeff Hinderscheid

**Mentor**
Sylvia Wilson  
Leonardo Cortez-Heredia  
Karen Elizondo  
Annette Gallegos

**Role Model**
Flora P. Godinez-George  
Isis Rodriguez  
Steven Howard  
David Rosen

**Leadership**
Elliott Robinson

**Team**
1760 Fremont Moving Crew:  
Antonio De La Peña  
Rigo Sanchez  
John T. Moore  
Patrick Brown  
Rich Olaguibel  
Christopher White  
Sylvia Solis  
Sara Louise Brown  
Stephanie Mills

**Public Authority Unit**
Corinne Barrett  
Victory Caravez  
Beatriz Torres-Ortega  
Sarita Arellano  
Rachel Robledo  
Adelma Rock  
Bertha Gonzalez

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**Mary Zurita to Trade Executive Suite for Sweet Life**

Her last name may start with a Z, but she was always the first one to call for high priority issues or to reach our top County Executive.
After an amazing 39 years of County service, Mary Zurita is trading in her third floor cubicle with a view for a more relaxing life with her family. In honor of her longevity with the County and the high regard she is held throughout the county ranks, she was presented with a resolution by the Board of Supervisors this week, marking both her extraordinary years of service as well as the impact she has had on the County as an organization, her co-workers and the lives of so many county residents her work has touched.

As she winds down her career, Mary shared some thoughts and stories from her decades of work.

Q. Tell us about your first job at the County in Public Works.
In June 1979, I started as a Typist Clerk II in the Abandoned Vehicle Abatement and Litter Program with two Abandoned Vehicle Investigators and one Safety Investigator. I prepared letters to registered vehicle owners, submitted monthly reports to the CHP, handled phone calls from upset and angry citizens regarding their vehicles, coordinated with vehicle dismantlers and provided clerical support to the Safety Investigator. I had an IBM Selectric typewriter, plenty of white-out and carbon paper.

Q. Is there a project or event that you worked on that really stands out during your tenure?
Monterey County was the host county for the annual Public Works Secretarial Seminar held May 2001 in collaboration with CSAC and sponsors. I was the lead person working with the secretarial staff to coordinate the logistics and activities with county staff: Monterey Bay Aquarium for a welcome reception, Doubletree Hotel for the venue, local transportation company for shuttle bus service, scheduling a Pebble Beach tour and a lunch at the Laguna Seca Red Bull Center/Skip Barber Racing School. It was a full-day event loaded with information and training for office professionals. The event was a success with a high number of attendees from 58 counties visiting Monterey County to enjoy our beautiful coastline and weather. It was a challenging and rewarding experience.

Q. What were the challenges moving from working at the department level to the Executive Assistant to the CAO?
It was a fast pace environment trying to learn new responsibilities and challenges while meeting deadlines, focusing critical attention to matters that were highly sensitive and controversial, continuous contact with the Board of Supervisors, their district office staff, Clerk of the Board’s office, department heads and executive staff, county employees, legislators, local agencies, media requests and the public. It takes patience and flexibility to arrange and manage calendar conflicts and schedule meetings or conference calls at a moment’s notice. Also, organizing and prioritizing tasks and projects was critical to meet the CAO’s goals.

Q. Not many people stay in the same workplace for 39 years. What has kept you at the county all these years?
Working for the County, I came across opportunities to learn and enhance my secretarial and administrative skills, continued to expand my education by volunteering and participating in training programs such as STARS (Specialized Training for Awareness Resources and Skills) for office professionals and many County training workshops and most importantly, receiving the support from executive management.

Mary’s advice to make your work life a success?

“Continue to enhance your skills and education, stay positive, network with other departments and agencies, serve as a mentor or be a mentee, volunteer for county activities or community events, and lastly, take time out for yourself and family. I truly enjoyed working with the County family. Best wishes!”

Who’s the boss here? CAO Lew Bauman enjoys a lighter moment with Mary Zurita. Their long-standing working relationship and camaraderie made these two a dynamic duo for the County.