Health Department Director Elsa Jimenez joins in the Awareness Walk festivities.

Breastfeeding Awareness Walk Celebrates Families, Health

This bright, cheerful and colorful event celebrates mothers, babies and good health. It is the Breastfeeding Awareness Walk and Health Fair.

Did you know that Monterey County is one of only a few counties in California with a lactation in the workplace policy that provides employees with breastfeeding resources and support that exceed state and federal requirements?
That support is echoed in the community, at the Health Department’s Annual Breastfeeding Awareness Walk and Health Fair which took place August 7th at the Salinas WIC office on Alisal Street.

The event is now in its 12th year and draws a big crowd, this year with more than 450 participants.

Highlights of the day included the Wheelie Mobilee Interactive Kids Museum and the presentation of resolutions by Monterey County and the City of Salinas proclaiming August as “Breastfeeding Awareness Month.” This is a week marked both nationally and internationally to improve the health of babies around the world.

Activities at the event include a walk through the neighborhood near the event, a certified farmers’ market plus a wide array of information booths from over 22 local health and social service agencies, including breastfeeding support services from WIC, Natividad Medical Center and La Leche League.

For more information on the policy and breastfeeding services, visit the Health Department’s Breastfeeding and Lactation Services webpage or contact the Breastfeeding Coordinator Janet Vaughn at vaughanjc@co.monterey.ca.us.

Meet Jason Cameron

Jason Cameron is continuing his career of service, now working on behalf of his fellow veterans as Monterey County’s Military and Veterans Affairs Officer.

Cameron knows veterans and their issues well. He is a vet, having served in the United States Marine Corps from 1993 to 1997 as well as in the California Army National Guard from 2009 to 2015.
After his military career, he has focused on jobs that help his fellow veterans and brings a wealth of experience, knowledge and strategic partnerships with the California State Military Department and CalVet. He has served as a Site Director for the Veteran's Resource Centers of America and a Senior Resource Manager with the State of California Work for Warriors program.

He began his job as Military and Veterans Affairs Officer on April 30th and shares his thoughts on the job and the tasks ahead.

**Q. What interested you in seeking the MVAO position for Monterey County?**

**A.** The answer to this would be twofold: job duties and location.

As a former Marine and Army National Guardsmen coupled with a passion helping our military and veteran community, this is the perfect role for me.

The location was just as important as my wife and I were looking for a long-term opportunity where we can raise our son in an area we love. Growing up, I lived in small farming communities in the Sacramento Valley and lived on the coast in Mendocino and Fort Bragg. In many ways I feel “at home” Monterey County because of its familiarity with the areas where I grew up.

**Q. You have worked in assisting veterans at many levels. What would you say are the greatest needs for Monterey County veterans?**

**A.** Awareness. In many ways awareness is the missing piece. There are so many things available to our military community that are often overlooked or simply not found when looking on your own.

The ability of the Military & Veterans Affairs Office to get out in the community and market our services is crucial. I view this office as the first step to “all services and benefits” available to our transitioning military, reserves, veterans and their families. From filing compensation or pension claims to providing van-pool services to the VA Palo Alto Health Care System and referrals to community partners for employment and homeless services, we are the first step.

**Q. How will your connections and past work with state agencies help veterans in Monterey County?**

**A.** Leveraging past connections with the California Department of Veterans Affairs, the California
Military Department and Employer Support Guard and Reserve, to name a few, will prove to be instrumental for our county’s military and veteran population, particularly state and federal resources. I am working with the CalVET Deputy Secretary regarding a Women’s Veterans Workshop that will be held in September at the Marina Library.

Q. As you get comfortable in this new job, are there new emphases or new paths you’d like to see for the Military and Veterans Affairs Office?

A. I want our county’s military and veterans to know that we are here for them and they are welcome through our doors anytime. We have walk in and appointment opportunities throughout the county, we are just a phone call away at 831-647-7613.

In addition to excellent customer service, we will be looking to broaden our current client demographics to include reservists and National Guard members, retiring and discharging military members and dependents of veterans.

Giving Campaign Kicks Off With Major Prize

Getting your giving campaign deduction started this week could earn you a big prize!

If you are considering making a payroll or one-time deduction, making it early could make you a winner and put you in the running for two tickets to the Pebble Beach Concours d’Elegance.

For this first week of the campaign, new donors who sign up for at least $5 per month in regular Payroll deductions or choose a one-time $60 donation will automatically be entered in the drawing for tickets to attend the famous Concours. You must sign up for these deductions by August 21st. The drawing will be held August 26th.

The first week of the Employee Giving Campaign is seeing lots of fun activities on the horizon in departments for fundraising.

Week two of the campaign will launch the online auction, so get ready to scope out the amazing items and bid beginning August 20th on the campaign website.
And a reminder, if you have questions about payroll deductions or how the giving campaign works, be sure to contact your department coordinators, the list of coordinators is online.