Violence Reduction Program Earns Probation CSAC Award

Congratulations to the Probation Department and its staff at Juvenile Hall for earning another award for a violence-reduction program that has had a positive impact on both staff and youth.

The ABC Program has earned a Merit Award in the 2018 California State Association of Counties Challenge Award program. The program is an incentive-based behavior modification program, offering points for good...
behavior with incentives such as increased recreation, movie nights, ‘renting’ electronic or board games or ‘shopping’ at the commissary which was created with the help of California Youth Outreach.

The genesis of the program came last year as staff was anticipating changes from a new state mandate restricting the amount of time a youth can be locked in his/her room in a facility. Generally, room confinement is used to separate youth in cases of violent behavior or to de-escalate tensions.

“We realized that this would be the perfect time to drastically change our practices, not only to comply with state law but to create a program to positively benefit minors and improve safety for our staff,” explains Juvenile Institution Supervisor Michael Palmer.

A committee, which included representatives from management, veteran and newer staff, Children’s Behavioral Health and the Monterey County Office of Alternative Education, researched evidence-based practices and toured facilities throughout the state, ultimately creating a program based on a previously used in-house model.

Training sessions were held for both staff and youth; additionally, staff underwent Behavioral Health training to better understand trauma informed care and diffusing tense situations through counseling. The program launched before the end of last year and is seeing positive results.

“The greatest indicator of success for this program has been the change in culture within Juvenile Hall itself,” explains Palmer. “Minors are being better served by encouraging positive behaviors while also addressing the factors that lead to negative ones. Major Incidents and Use of Force Incidences (which can result in injuries to staff) are down and we are seeing more youth at the Hall view staff as approachable, positive role models and counselors.”

This is the second award for the ABC Program, it has already been recognized by the California Association of Probation Institutions Administrators (CAPIA). Palmer credits the success of the program to the dedication and adaptability of the Juvenile Hall staff; the tireless efforts of Behavioral Health staff Gretchen Beddingfield and Kelley Moulton and the continued support of the Hall’s community partners.

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**Trick or Treat, But Safety First This Halloween**

Halloween gives us a chance to wear wacky costumes, indulge with sweets and have a scary good time, but when it comes to kids and pets, be sure safety is a priority.
Before you launch into your Halloween festivities, be sure to check out safety tips from our Health Department. Whether you are escorting little goblins around the neighborhood, handing out goodies or have pets you want to include in the fun, a few simple precautions means everyone can have fun.

For kids, be sure costumes and accessories are flame retardant (think of those candle lit decorations!) and be sure to have a flashlight for your treat-getting outing. You can find other useful tips here.

Pets are fun to dress up this time of year, but be sure their costume allows freedom of movement. Additional tips about candy and pet anxiety can be found here. The best thing you can do for your pet is make sure their tags, license and microchip are up to date in case of a Halloween escape.

County Goes Pink for Breast Cancer Awareness

The call out for ‘Wear it Wednesday,’ to wear the color pink in honor of Breast Cancer Awareness, was heard loud and clear throughout county workplaces this week. October is Breast Cancer Awareness month and wearing the color pink has come to show honor to survivors, remember those lost and to support the progress being made to defeat the disease.

Wear it Wednesday was organized by the Employee Wellness program.

Check out your colleagues and friends decked out in their best pink!
Thanks to all who took part in Wear It Wednesday and shared your photos with us. Top row: Social Services (left), CalWORKS Employment Services (right). Middle row: District Attorney (left), Assessor (right). Bottom row: Treasurer-Tax Collector (left), Monterey County Libraries, Marina Branch (right).