Employee Shares Citizenship Story

One member of our County family is celebrating her new status as a United States citizen.

Biljana Babic-Tatomirovic, an Accounting Technician at Child Support Services, recently completed the long citizenship process. Her citizenship ceremony took place on her 43rd birthday late last year. She says it was the greatest gift she could ever receive, describing the moment she and 470 others became citizens at a huge event in Campbell.
“The United States Citizenship and Immigration Services Section Chief welcomed us all and read the names of more than 60 countries from which we all came,” she says. “Then it was time for the most important part of the ceremony, the Oath of Allegiance. After we all completed the Oath, the entire auditorium exploded in joy, laughter and excitement, everyone waving flags and taking photos.”

But it was a long journey to that day. Biljana shares her story and how she achieved citizenship.

Q. Where were you born and how did you come to the United States?

A. I was born in Yugoslavia, a country that no longer exists. The war in Yugoslavia started when I was in high school. The result of it was that one country got split into six. Consequently, my citizenship changed from Yugoslav to Serbian because that was the republic in which I lived. My husband came to the United States as a Fulbright Scholar. A few months after we got married, he became an American citizen and I came to the United States in 2014.

Q. Did not having citizenship create any problems?

A. My husband petitioned the Immigration and Naturalization Service and I received my permanent resident card before moving to the U. S.

Having legal status made things easier as I had my social security number and ability to work. The only thing that worried me was the changing political views regarding immigration. Because of that, I did not travel outside of the United States until my citizenship process was completed.

Q. Those who have not had to apply for citizenship don’t know what a lengthy process it is.

A. The citizenship process is very long, there are many steps before you are even eligible to apply.

The first step is to become a legal resident and get a green card which can take a year or more. Then you have three to five years minimum to apply for citizenship. When you do apply, there is another year for background checks. If you are cleared, you can take the exam (English proficiency and American history and government). In my case, the process took five and a half years.

Q. How do you feel now that your citizenship journey is completed?

A. It makes me feel wonderful. Since the moment I set foot in this country, I experienced nothing but kindness and moral support from everybody I met. Being an American officially gives me the feeling and assurance that this is where I belong.
Natividad Launches Radiology Project

Natividad has begun a major project to modernize radiology services at the hospital.

The project ‘groundbreaking’ actually took place indoors and VIPs used mallets to break through walls instead of digging up dirt to kick off the first phase of construction.

This is a major improvement project which will remodel the entire department. It is being done in four phases so services remain operational.

“This essential project will bring the very latest, state-of-the-art technology to the Radiology Department, supporting our Level II Trauma Center and adding to the excellent quality of care Natividad offers patients,” said Assistant Administrator Andrea Rosenberg.

Last year, Natividad performed nearly 74,000 radiologic procedures.

The $14 million project is funded in part by a grant from the Harden Foundation. You can read more about it on the Natividad website.

Health Department, Partner Earn TAMC Award

The Health Department and the Gonzales Police Department teamed up for last year’s successful Ciclovia Gonzales event there, which got locals outdoors, walking and riding bikes.

Monterey County Administrative Office
The Transportation Agency of Monterey took notice and honored the two agencies with the 2018 Project Team Transportation Excellence Award.

The Transportation Agency’s Excellence Awards honor community members, programs and projects that make a significant contribution to improve transportation in Monterey County.

Ciclovía Gonzales was designed to promote bicycling and fitness in the city. Several streets were shut down for the event, during which children and parents walk, rode bikes and in some cases danced down the open streets.

“Bringing together community residents and city officials is always rewarding because that is when you really see the power of what working together can do to strengthen the fabric of the community,” said Carmen Gil, Health In All Policies Manager. “Ciclovía Gonzales was successful because of the commitment to improve community health and well-being from all those involved.”

But wait, there is more! Not resting on their laurels, the Health Department Ciclovía Team is now working on Ciclovía King City to be held on April 14th. Plan on joining in on the fun!