Monterey County Thyme for Toastmasters members (rear l-r) John Snively, Greta Arevalo, Leeset Torres, Richard Gierman, Juan Plascencia. (Front l-r) Shandy Carroll, Liza McCorkle, Ayna Gutierrez, Veronica Arroyo

Employees Use Toastmasters for Confidence, Career Development

You may have heard of Toastmasters – an organization which promotes communication, public speaking and leadership skills. But did you know that there is a Toastmasters group just for County staff?

The group has nine members and is growing. It meets every Tuesday from Noon to 1:00 p.m. at Schilling Place in the Thyme Conference Room and aptly calls itself “Thyme for Toastmasters.”
The program is not County-sponsored, it is its own branch of the larger Toastmasters organization but it is open only to County employees. Participants say Toastmasters offers a supportive environment to build confidence and practice public speaking techniques with colleagues….and more.

Why do good communication skills give you a professional advantage? Just ask John Snively, Management Analyst III in the Resource Management Agency who joined in the County Toastmaster group. He says besides developing skills, the group creates connections and he has learned a lot about other employees and departments.

Q. How did you find out about Toastmasters and what prompted you to join?
A. I read about Toastmasters several years ago and decided to try the Thyme for Toastmasters club after seeing a poster at the Schilling campus. It was a convenient location and chance to meet my County colleagues.

Q. How would you describe an average meeting?
A. Inviting, relaxed and educational. While the meeting structure is formal, Thyme for Toastmasters is a welcoming and safe environment for anyone to build communication skills at their own pace.

Q. Many people think Toastmasters is just about giving speeches, but as you know, it’s more about communication. Can you share your thoughts on that and why is that important?
A. Speech is only one aspect of how a message is conveyed to the audience. Gestures, tone and eye contact also play a part in making a message impactful. The focus is communicating a message effectively rather than the content of the message. Various roles assigned each week to participants provide opportunities to practice different types of communication.

Q. How has taking part benefitted you personally? Professionally?
A. Improved communication is my main goal, but I have discovered other benefits such as organization and leadership skills.

If this interests you, you can get more information about attending a meeting as a guest or membership costs from Greta Arevalo at x1495 or ArevaloG@co.monterey.ca.us.
Child Support Services Celebrates Major Collections for Local Families

Child Support Services has been honored many times over the years for its impressive record of collecting child support for local families, just one of the many services this department provides.

Sometimes collections are routine, but sometimes they take extra effort and get big results! In those cases, employees who have made collections of $5,000 or more get a bit of a spotlight and can 'Ring the Bell' to acknowledge the results.

Here are three recent collections that had staff members ringing the bell:

Child Support Officer Miguel Barrera’s sharp-eyed review of a non-custodial parent’s asset list resulted in a major collection. This parent was paying monthly support through an income withholding order, but the parent’s asset list showed a bank account with significant funds. Barrera issued a bank levy for $35,556 in past due child support.

Child Support Officer Frank De La Torre’s efforts to establish a good rapport with a non-custodial parent ‘paid off’ in a big way. De La Torre spent a lot of time explaining about potential enforcement actions, payments and balance. Taking the time was the right decision as the parent has now paid $33,100 in owed back child support.

Child Support Officer Scott Tamanaha turned a driver’s license situation into closing the books on a child support case. A non-custodial parent asked Tamanaha for a release of license. This parent’s license had been suspended due to non-payment of support. Tamanaha explained how and what it would take to get that – which is to pay off past due support. It took six months, but that parent sent a check in the amount of $18,381, the entire amount owed.

All these funds were sent to the families owed child support. Great job!
Health Department Celebrates Sanchez, Edgcomb Contributions

The Health Department is saying happy retirement to two longtime staff members and celebrating their accomplishments.

Lots of Health Department employees know Patricia Sanchez because Sanchez has just retired after 41 years county service, ALL of it, at the Health Department.

"Pat is someone I met when I came to the Health Department 18 years ago," said Health Department Director Elsa Jimenez as she honored Sanchez last week with a resolution in her honor. “She is a breath of fresh air in our services and our building. Everyone looks up to her, she is a role model for empathy and caring; serving the most vulnerable in our community and modeling for the rest of us how to do the same."

Sanchez joined the Health Department in 1978 and over four decades served residents with chronic and mental illnesses, communicable diseases and those living in poverty.

She was instrumental in starting some of the department's home visitation programs such as Adolescents Caring for Themselves, the County's first program for teen mothers and their newborns and the Cal-Learn program for pregnant and parenting teens.

Not only has she touched thousands of lives through her life's work in the Health Department but she was there when disaster struck. During the Loma Prieta Earthquake in 1989 and flooding in 1995, she served as a disaster worker helping those in need in the communities she knew so well.

Thank you, Patricia for your four decades of service!

Also retiring is Clinic Services Bureau Chief Julie Edgcomb after 20 years of County service.

Edgcomb began her county career with the Probation Department in 1973 and worked as one of the first female Counselors at what was then the Natividad Boys’ Ranch.

Edgcomb left the County in 1978 but returned in 2004 as Outpatient Services Director at the Laurel Clinics and successfully worked on the transition of hospital-based clinics to Federally Qualified
Health Center Lookalike status under the Health Department, thus greatly improving the financial viability of clinical operations.

As Clinic Services Bureau Chief she functioned in a shared role capacity in the Health Department and at Natividad. Her list of accomplishments is long but include successfully expanding outpatient clinic services, the completion of a new and expanded outpatient health center in Seaside, collaborating with Natividad to build a new family medicine clinic for its residency program, adding two satellite clinics to provide primary care services to residents with severe mental illness and getting Monterey County into the federal drug pricing program so that low income patients can pay less for prescriptions.

It doesn’t appear Edgcomb will let retirement slow her down. She continues to serve on boards and committees including the governing board of the Central California Alliance for Health.

Thank you Julie for all you have done for the residents of Monterey County!