Every weekday at the Humboldt Senior Resource Center more than 500 meals are being assembled and packed in order to keep Humboldt County kids well-nourished through the summer. More than half of the county’s children qualify for free-or-reduced cost school lunches, and they are no less hungry when out of the classroom. The Summer Lunch for Children program was created by Food for People two decades ago in response to kids losing access to nutrition for the 10 weeks schools are out of session. According to the food bank’s Child Nutrition Programs Summer 2017, Vol I, Issue 4.

$3.8 million dental health grant to benefit local children

DHHS is expected to receive a $3.8 million grant to participate in the state-wide Local Dental Pilot Project (LDPP) aimed at improving access to dental care for income-eligible children. The pilot project will focus on children ages 0 to 12 years old who are at high risk of dental disease by providing case management and prevention-based services throughout the county. Efforts will be focused on children who are enrolled in Medi-Cal and children residing in...
At DHHS, we strive every day to achieve our mission of reducing poverty and connecting people and communities to opportunities for health and wellness. This is not something we can do alone, and we value and nurture our partnerships with community stakeholders.

DHHS contracts with many local nonprofit and community-based organizations to provide vital services, often for the most vulnerable members of our community, including mental health services, child care, housing, food and nutrition, family reunification and foster care services.

Recently, the Humboldt County Board of Supervisors sent a letter to the legislature expressing its strong opposition to California Assembly Bill 1250 (Jones-Sawyer), a bill that would severely limit our ability to contract for these vital services. AB 1250 would impose harsh new requirements on our local nonprofits that contract with the county, including new audits and monthly reports, all at the contractor’s expense.

We rely on our local nonprofits to deliver services to residents where they live, play, work and go to school, in culturally respectful and client-directed ways. We know that individuals and families respond best when they can access services in the places most convenient for them, close to their natural supports, from providers they know and trust. Family Resource Centers know the families in their communities, Open Door Community Health Centers know their patients, and individuals have built trusting relationships with the staff at Food for People. We rely on them as community partners.

Government cannot solve all of society’s problems. Partner agencies play a huge role in this community, and AB 1250 would hurt them. I’m grateful that our Board of Supervisors has joined with the California State Association of Counties and a growing coalition of almost 200 organizations and local governments in an effort to stop the bill.

And, I’m grateful to our partners who work every day to improve the lives of Humboldt County residents. Thank you.

More than 95 community partners and DHHS employees attended the annual CalFresh Forum June 23, at the River Lodge in Fortuna. The event, hosted by Food for People and DHHS, included presentations from the California Food Policy Advocates, California Association of Food Banks, Catholic Charities Immigration Program and Humboldt State University.
Board recognizes Elder Abuse Awareness Month

The Board of Supervisors declared June Elder Abuse Awareness Month, noting that nearly 15 percent of Humboldt County’s population is 65 years and older. Adult Protective Services receives approximately 130 reports of elder and vulnerable adult abuse and neglect per month. The board said encouraging increased awareness of elder abuse is an important part of keeping elders safe.

Funding for the life jacket project comes through a grant from the Sea Tow Foundation. Life jackets will be offered during business hours in infant to adult sizes at the locations below. Call ahead to locations to confirm availability.

Loaner Life Jacket Locations

- **Dream Quest**
  100 Country Club Dr.
  Willow Creek
  530-629-3564
- **Early Bird Café**
  40640 Highway 299
  Willow Creek
  530-629-4431
- **Eureka National Weather Service Office**
  Woodley Island Marina
  300 Startare Dr.
  Eureka
  707-443-6484

- **Swimmer’s Delight**
  Van Duzen County Park
  Carlotta
  707-445-7651
- **Tsewenaldin Inn**
  12482 Highway 96, Hoopa
  530-625-4294
- **Tsunami Surf & Sport**
  445 Conger St., Ste. B
  Garberville
  707-923-1965
- **Tsunami Surf & Sport**
  1580 Upper Pacific Dr.
  Shelter Cove
  707-923-1965

Water recreation locations. Community members of all ages will be able to borrow life jackets from seven stations to wear during a day at the beach or river. Public Health and the Water Safety Coalition of Northwestern California celebrated the life jacket distribution on June 22 at Woodley Island Marina.
Red Noses raise awareness

Social Services’ MG Unit, which focuses on eligibility determinations and helps clients stay connected to benefits, celebrated Red Nose Day on May 25. Red Nose is an international effort to raise awareness about childhood poverty. "When we do Cal-Fresh, it goes directly to feeding kids," Eligibility Supervisor Janine Lauritzen said. “It helps children’s lives. That’s what we do every day.”

Mental Health welcomes new medical director

Mental Health’s new Medical Director Dr. Timothy Gannon started the directorship in May and has been busy getting to know colleagues and procedures. “I really believe in working together well with the nurses and social workers,” he said. “Ultimately, it’s more self-sustaining, and there’s an excitement to going to work.” Gannon said he’s interested in helping improve efficiency at Mental Health and is passionate about women’s mental health and facilitating improved substance abuse treatment services. “I want to see more people with quality treatment.” He moved from Alameda with his family and comes by way of Traditions Behavioral Health. Gannon said that he’d been looking for a move to a smaller community. “I’ve always liked smaller places. I love nature,” he added, saying that he’s made time for a few short visits to Humboldt County’s beaches and redwood forest trails.

Dr. Gannon completed medical school at Michigan State University College of Human Medicine and did his residency at the Cleveland Clinic Foundation Psychiatric Residency Program.

Help Wanted

DHHS is currently recruiting qualified applicants for a variety of positions. For a list of job opportunities, visit humboldtgov.org/hr and click Job Opportunities, or contact Employee Services at 707-441-5510.
Law enforcement and mental health professionals were honored by the Humboldt County Behavioral Health Board (BHB) during the board’s May is Mental Health Matters Month Community Service Awards presentation on June 15.

The Arcata and Eureka police departments, the Humboldt County Department of Health & Human Services’ (DHHS) Mobile Response and Crisis Intervention Team along with Humboldt County Correctional Facility and Mental Health staff were all thanked for their compassionate assistance to individuals challenged by mental illness.

“Ninety percent of the state hospital beds that existed 50 years ago are gone,” said BHB Chair Tim Ash. “It is no coincidence that the number of mentally ill inmates in state prisons and jails or homeless have risen by a comparable number. That creates quite a challenge for first responders and local responders commended for mental health service awardees, from left: APD Lt. Bart Silvers; Sheriff’s Correctional Lt. Duane Christian; EPD Capt. Steve Watson; Supervising Mental Health Clinician Kelly Johnson; Mental Health clinicians Mark Goldhawk, Daryn Nimmo and Donna Bullard; and Sheriff’s Administrative Sgt. Dennis Griffin.

mental health staff. The awardees should all be commended for their innovations and efforts to meet that challenge.”

Jail and law enforcement staff were credited for exercising intervention techniques learned through Crisis Intervention Training (CIT). The program helps officers and other first responders effectively and sensitively deal with situations where mental health issues are a concern.

“It’s widely recognized as bringing about better outcomes for people in a mental health crisis, as well as improving officer safety,” said DHHS Mental Health Senior Program Manager Mark Lamers. “All the participating agencies should be commended for their efforts, and bringing CIT benefits back to the community.”

“Our friends, neighbors and family members affected by mental illnesses all benefit from their compassionate efforts,” Ash said of the community service awardees.

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Mental Health staff got some hands-on training with fire extinguishers on June 9, thanks to Humboldt Bay Fire. Administrative Analyst Larry Groom heads up Mental Health’s safety committee and polled staff about what training was needed. Battalion Chief Chris Emmons set up the department’s propane flame device and let everyone practice in a safe environment.

At left, Groom douses flames controlled by Emmons, right.
Corrigan was one of 11 applicants accepted into the program. He will start the program in August, and will be eligible to apply for the lab directorship when he completes it.

Corrigan has served as the manager at DHHS’s Public Health Laboratory for the past seven years. Prior to coming to Humboldt he was a microbiologist for Sonoma County. To fulfill the need for a lab director, Sonoma County Laboratory Director Mike Ferris currently oversees Humboldt’s lab as well.

Corrigan estimates the cost for tuition and supplies to be almost $70,000.

“I am grateful for this pathway and look forward to the challenges ahead as well as the opportunity to give back to my community and our local Public Health Laboratory,” Corrigan said.

Jeremy takes great pride in the work he and his team do in the lab and has a very strong work ethic,” said Public Health Director Michele Stephens. “This is a tremendous professional opportunity for him and a huge benefit to Humboldt County as a result. He’s worked hard for it and truly deserves such an opportunity.”

The Public Health Laboratory provides testing for things like influenza, measles, norovirus, salmonella and a variety of respiratory viruses. The lab also conducts water testing and tests ticks for the Lyme disease-causing bacterium.

A statewide program intended to address the shortage of qualified public health laboratory directors in California will pay for Humboldt County’s current lab manager to obtain a doctorate in Public Health.

Stringent requirements, including a Ph.D., supervisory experience, board certification and a license have made it difficult to fill directorships throughout the state, including in Humboldt County. Public Health Laboratory Manager Jeremy Corrigan said many directors are overseeing two labs and some are close to retirement.

In response to the need, the LabAspire program, sponsored in part by the California Department of Public Health (CDPH), committed $500,000 in funding to assist candidates in fulfilling the necessary requirements.

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It's tick season, and DHHS's Division of Environmental Health (DEH) is reminding people to protect themselves and their animals.

The tiny, spider-like bugs attach themselves onto the skin of people and animals and feed on their blood. While many ticks are not harmful, there are some that transmit disease.

“It is impossible to tell if a tick carries Lyme disease or any other tick-borne disease by looks alone,” said DEH Director Melissa Martel. “It's important to educate yourself on tick safety and precautions.”

Only one tick found locally has the bacterium that causes Lyme disease—the Western blacklegged tick.

“As the weather gets warmer and we start to spend more time outdoors, we increase the chances of our exposure to adult ticks and the smaller nymphal stage ticks, which can also carry disease,” Martel said. “If you spend time in brushy, wooded areas or in our beach grasses, it's important to check yourself thoroughly when you leave. If you find a tick on you, remove it properly and immediately.”

If you find a tick attached to your skin, use fine-tipped tweezers to grasp the tick as close to the surface of the skin as possible. Pull upward with steady, even pressure. Do not jerk or twist it. Make sure the entire tick has been removed, including the head. Once the tick has been removed, clean the area and your hands with rubbing alcohol, an iodine scrub or soap and water.

The Public Health Lab offers free tick identification. After removing a tick, if you want to know what type it is, place it in a sealed container or zip-close bag with a paper towel moistened with water. If the tick is identified by lab staff as a Western blacklegged tick, they can test it for Borrelia burgdorferi, the bacterium that causes Lyme disease, for a $40 fee. The Public Health Lab is located at 529 I St. in Eureka. For more information about tick testing, call 707-268-2179.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention offers the following tips to stay tick-free this season:

- Avoid wooded and brushy areas with high grass and leaf litter. Ticks are also common locally in our beaches grassy dunes.
- When out on the trails, stick to the center.
- Use repellents that contain 20 percent or greater DEET, picaridin, or IR3535 directly on to exposed skin. Always follow product label instructions. Parents should apply this product to their children, avoiding hands, eyes and mouth.
- Use products that contain permethrin on clothing. Treat clothing and gear, such as boots, pants, socks and tents with products containing 0.5 percent permethrin. It remains protective through several washings. Pre-treated clothing is available and may be protective longer.
- Remove ticks found on your body immediately.
- Bathe or shower as soon as possible after coming indoors (preferably within two hours) to wash off and more easily find ticks that are crawling on you.
- Conduct a full-body tick check using a hand-held or full-length mirror to view all parts of your body upon return from tick-infested areas. Parents should check their children for ticks under the arms, in and around the ears, inside the belly button, behind the knees, between the legs, around the waist and especially in their hair.
- Examine gear and pets. Ticks can ride into the home on clothing and pets, then attach to a person later, so carefully examine pets, coats and day packs.
Six Humboldt County pharmacies are now accepting expired, unused or unwanted medications, including prescription, non-prescription, controlled and non-controlled substances and pet medications.

In March 2016, Cloney’s Pharmacy set up medication disposal bins at its McKinleyville location and one of its Eureka locations. Since that time, four more pharmacies have followed suit.

Medications should be removed from their containers and placed in a sealed plastic bag before being deposited into a bin. Please do not deposit medication bottles.

Funding and support for the medication disposal bins are provided by a collaboration of Rx Safe Humboldt, St. Joseph Health, Humboldt Waste Management Authority, Humboldt Allies for Substance Abuse Prevention, the Independent Practice Association, DHHS and local pharmacies.

For more information about safe medication disposal, visit rxsafehumboldt.org or humboldt.gov/2151/Prescription-Drug-Safety.

The disposal bins are located at:
- Cloney’s Pharmacy, 1567 City Center Road, McKinleyville (near Safeway), 707-840-9923
- Cloney’s Pharmacy, 2515 Harrison Ave., Eureka, 707-443-7086
- Green’s Pharmacy, 906 Main St., Fortuna, 707-725-4431
- Palco Pharmacy, 113 Main St., Scotia, 707-764-3591
- Ring’s Pharmacy, 362 Main St., Ferndale, 707-786-4511
- Willow Creek Pharmacy, 39050 Highway 299, Willow Creek, 530-629-3144.
In mid-May, the homeless preliminary Point-in-Time (PIT) count data was released, showing a total of 668 people in Humboldt County experienced homelessness on the night of Feb. 27, compared to 1,180 counted in 2015.

The biennial PIT count, conducted by the Humboldt Housing and Homeless Coalition (HHHC) and local volunteers, documents the number of sheltered and unsheltered homeless people on a single night during the winter.

The count is a U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) requirement. Information gathered during this count is used by local planning departments and by county nonprofit agencies in grant applications and planning.

More than 15 agencies and 80 trained volunteers assisted in this year’s PIT count which showed Eureka having the largest homeless population in Humboldt County, followed by Arcata.

While the count provides important information about the local homeless population, it is not a scientific survey.

The count takes place in communities across the U.S. on a single night in January. This year Humboldt County received a waiver from HUD that allowed the count to be conducted in February.

Starting the morning of Feb. 28, and going through the week, volunteers connected with homeless people throughout the county to administer voluntary surveys with questions about age, physical and mental health status and where they had slept on the designated night.

The HHHC is still in the process of analyzing the data and comparing it to previous years and will post a final report to its website upon completion.

The HHHC is a coalition of housing advocates, businesses, funders, elected officials, service and housing providers, faith-based organizations and other community stakeholders working together to identify and address local housing needs. In Humboldt County, the HCCC is the lead organization for homeless issues and the federally designated Continuum of Care. For more information about the HHHC, visit its website at humboldthousing.org/about-the-hhcc.
tribal communities and remote geographic regions of the county.

The Department of Health Care Services received 23 proposals from across the state from entities competing for the $150 million in funding. Humboldt County was one of 15 communities approved—the only rural county to receive funding on its own.

Leigh Pierre-Oetker, oral health consultant for DHHS’s Public Health branch, said this will be hugely beneficial for the county, and will help combat the county’s high rate of children with tooth decay.

“There is a lack of providers who take Denti-Cal,” the dental version of Medi-Cal, “in Humboldt County which can make it tricky for families to maintain a consistent regimen with their children to get preventive dental services,” Pierre-Oetker said. “Add barriers such as being rurally located, lack of transportation and poverty, and the challenges become greater.”

DHHS has partnered with the following agencies on the LDPP: Redwood Community Action Agency (RCAA), K’ima:w Dental Clinic, Redwoods Rural Health Center, Open Door Community Health Centers, California Center for Rural Policy at Humboldt State University and Humboldt Network of Family Resource Centers (FRC).

“This is a great opportunity for a rural county to demonstrate what can be achieved by building upon partnerships and working together to support oral health for children,” said Public Health Director Michele Stephens.

Over the next four years, DHHS and partner agencies will perform outreach, prevention and education using Women, Infant and Children Well Child Dental Visits, RCAA’s TOOTH education program in daycares, preschools and elementary schools, the FRC network and other community events. ◄