



El Diario Sin Nombre

The Newsletter Without a Name

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ISD Offices Win Food Stamp Accuracy Awards

New Mexico Human Services Department

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Fifteen Income Support Division offices won awards from the USDA's Food and Nutrition Services for the accurate distribution of food stamp benefits. "I am proud of the offices that won awards this year," said Katie Falls, Income Support Division Director. "Food stamps are a major program for relieving hunger and helping families meet other obligations, such as medical and housing needs."

To qualify for any award, county offices must achieve a food stamp accuracy rate of 94 percent or better. The ISD offices are listed below.

"The Taos ISD staff worked long and hard for this award," said Marilyn Martinez, Taos ISD County Director. "We have a great team, and it is rewarding to see my staff get credit for their hard work and excellent customer service."



Region IV ROM, Mary Pat Miles (left) and County Directors (front row) Sharon Sturgill, Lea County; Olga Aldaz, Curry County; Juan Oropesa, Chavez County; (back row) Jerry Barnes, Eddy County; Sherry Molder, Roosevelt County receive Regional Food Stamp Program award from Ron Gwinn, Chief of Operations, USDA Food and Nutrition Services.

Join us for the First Governor's Hunger Summit

October 16-17
Albuquerque
Marriott
Pyramid

Taos, 98.5 percent
Hobbs, 97.7 percent
Farmington, 97.4 percent
Deming, 97.2 percent
Albuquerque's Northeast office, 96.6 percent
Las Cruces' East office, 96.1 percent
Gallup, 96.0 percent
Anthony, 95.9 percent

Albuquerque's Northwest office, 95.4 percent
Grants, 95.2 percent
Carlsbad, 94.9 percent
Las Cruces East office, 94.9 percent
Roswell, 94.8 percent
Española, 94.5 percent
Moriarty, 94.1 percent

HSD Employee Cast in Upcoming Movie

Besides being busy coordinating the Hunger Summit, Robyn Reede has also been active 'off the clock'. She recently auditioned for and was offered a small speaking role in a film shooting in the Albuquerque area, *Elvis Has Left The Building*, starring Kim Basinger. She plays a nosy convenience store clerk – a perfect part for any HSD employee.

The film is directed by Joel Zwick, who also directed *My Big Fat Greek Wedding*. The plot in *Elvis* centers around a fugitive Mary Kay Cosmetics representative who hooks up with a bored advertising executive as she's trying to avoid going down for the murder of several Elvis impersonators.

You can also catch Reede in the movie *Maniacs*, filmed in New Mexico two years ago

and starring Jeff Fahey—find it at video stores. Robyn serves as a council member for the local Screen Actors Guild branch and appears on-stage in many local productions. She was the nurse in Shakespeare in Santa Fe's Production of *Romeo and Juliet* and Queen Eleanor in *Lion in Winter* at the Santa Fe Playhouse.

Maybe she'll autograph your newsletter!

Governor's Hunger Summit Seeks to End Hunger in New Mexico

The HSD and the USDA will host the first-ever New Mexico Hunger Summit to focus on better ways to reduce hunger and food insecurity in New Mexico. It will be held at the Albuquerque Marriot Pyramid North Hotel October 16 to 17, in conjunction with World Food Day.

“We welcome this opportunity and challenge and look forward to hearing from families, advocates and agencies that run food programs so that collectively we can find ways to decrease hunger and improve food nutrition,” said Robyn Reede who is coordinating the event for HSD. The Income Support Division administers the largest state-run food programs, such as food stamps and school lunches. Each program provides direct food products to hundreds of thousands of low-income children, the elderly and home less shelters each month.

“Reports that many in New Mexico are turning to food pantries and other sources to help put food on the table have received considerable attention, and our administration intends to do something about it,” said Lieutenant Governor Diane Denish, who will speak at the conference along with Secretary Pamela Hyde.

“Overall, about 300 people have signed up to attend,” said Reede. “They include food banks, the USDA, public school food directors and others outside of state government.” Each of the five ISD regions also has three slots for the conference, which costs \$30 and will be paid for by ISD central office. ISD field offices typically provide emergency food stamps to families or provide information to clients on where to go in their community for most social services.

The event has five breakout groups that will focus on reducing hunger in New Mexico, improving health and nutrition awareness and finding ways to better coordinate public and private food aid programs. Keynote speakers for the event are Loretta Schwartz-Nobel, author of *Starving in the Shadow of Plenty*, and Judy Carter, Chairwoman-elect of America’s Second Harvest Board of Directors.

To bring a sense of reality to the summit, we discussed providing event participants only food that a typical homeless family might receive, but none of the hotels we talked with would go along with the idea because they wanted to do their own catering,” said Reede. “However, we do plan on



Actor Wes Studi, who starred in the movie *Geronimo* and played a Navajo policeman named Joe Leaphorn in the Tony Hillerman series, *Skinwalkers*, is being filed here for a ten-minute documentary, *Faces of Hunger in New Mexico*, which will premier during the Hunger Summit.

having stationary displays showing what families typically receive in food baskets and at homeless shelters.”



Health Secretary Patricia Montoya smiles reluctantly as she presents HSD employees Marty Eckert (left) and Cheryl Labruyere the State Employee Charity Campaign award for large agency most collections.

Two Satisfied Customers



Dennis and Maxine Suazo, eight and five years old, received NewMexikids goodies like tooth brushes and school supplies at the State Fair on September 8. They attend Bel Air Elementary school in Albuquerque and were at the fair with their grandmother

NewMexikids

MAD's Shauna Steele answers NewMexikids' questions and urges families to get their kids signed up for Medicaid.



Gurule is HSD's Health Insurance Guru



Patricia Gurule

For many, picking the right health care plan and getting the proper care when you need it can be a complicated, sometimes frustrating affair. That's why people often prefer to talk with someone who knows the rules, so that there is no misunderstanding to avoid a misunderstanding. Take MAD's Client Services Bureau, for instance. Each week, it receives about 4,000 telephone calls from clients --; mostly with questions about their eligibility or what health care plan they are

enrolled in.

In HSD, Patricia Gurule is the health care plan expert for employees' health, dental and vision plans. Lately, she has been answering hundreds of employee questions now that two new employee health plan expansions have taken effect: the addition of domestic partners and dependants up to age 25 years of age. "Most of the confusion involves the domestic partner rule," said Gurule. "One example is when employees seek to sign up both their ex-spouse and a current partner under their health care plan (sometimes divorce orders require one spouse to continue health care for the other). "In this situation," said Gurule, "the domestic partner can be signed up, but the employee will have to pay out of pocket to comply with the court order for his or her ex."

Gurule has been overwhelmed due to because the rule changes. "I like to treat employees the way I would like to be treated," she said. "People are very busy with their own work, and I want to help them navigate through this process so that

they can worry about their own responsibilities." Gurule practices what she preaches. Recently, she was commended for outstanding customer service by a child support enforcement worker in Las Vegas for outstanding customer service (see the Sept. 26 HSD e-news).

Each field office has health plan administrators who can help answer employees' questions concerning their health care benefits. "These people are of a great help to me," said Gurule. "Many know a lot and can answer most questions, like Emily Ulibarri in the Farmington CSED office." Gurule wants to get back out to the field to train new office health care administrators and provide information about logistics this spring, is coming up this spring when all employees will have to re-enroll in all of their health care plans.

Her advice to employees is to attend the seminars that will be offered by all of the health care plans. "Most of your questions can be answered on the spot and face to face," she said.

Fatherhood Initiative Meeting a Success



Neil Tift speaks for the first time in New Mexico about fatherhood issues for low-income dads.

“This is my first visit to New Mexico, and I’ve never seen such a tremendous amount of enthusiasm for fatherhood initiatives than I’ve seen here today,” said Neil Tift of the National Practitioners Network for Fathers and Families, based in Washington D.C. “Some states want to do something, but don’t know how and others aren’t interested in getting involved. Plus, the fact that I was invited by a woman’s organization (the TANF-funded Graduation Reality and Dual-Roles Skills program for pregnant and teen mothers) is a good sign.”

Tift led 30 social workers, representing numerous organizations that work with families, in a day-long fatherhood partnership meeting in Socorro October 2. The meeting’s goals were: to learn about the barriers that low-income fathers confront when trying to be involved in raising children; to learn about the important role that fathers and men in families play in shaping the development

of children; and to develop organizational strategies and staff training methods that enhance father involvement in all family services.

One social worker asked Tift, “How do you relate to a single mom the importance of the father in the home without making her feel bad?”. Tift replied that he did not mean to say that the family is doomed, but statistics show that kids have a better chance when they have the emotional support of both parents. It was also noted by one participant that there is a distinction between being a father and being involved in a child’s life, regardless of where the father lives.

“There was a lot of good information about father involvement,” said Laura Romero of ISD’s central office, which manages TANF contracts with agencies like GRADs that support families with children. “I want this information to be available to those who work with our clients.”

“Hopefully, this will help change the mindset of some to help them realize that dads also need support,” said Bernie Ortiz of CSED. “HSD is a good example of an agency that has always provided services to women.”

Not anymore. Jacqueline Baca heads up the CSED’s Fatherhood Initiative and she is not alone. “While we remain committed to vigorously establishing and enforcing child support orders, we also recognize that paying child support is not the only thing fathers are good for,” said CSED director Stephanie Gonzales, “By assisting

fathers in other areas, they may not only contribute support, but become more involved in their children’s lives.” This isn’t just rhetoric—CSED is looking at significantly reducing the interest rate on child support arrears, which is currently at 8.75 percent.

Other initiatives include establishing an outreach program for parents who are incarcerated to help them become involved in their children’s lives once they leave penal institutions and publishing women on the 25 Most Wanted List for owing child support – to demonstrate that fathers are not the only ones delinquent on their payments.

“The next New Mexico Fatherhood Conference will be in about six months, scheduled for either Albuquerque or Santa Fe,” said Baca.



Jacqueline Baca (left), Laura Romero and Bernie Ortiz with other social service agencies in Socorro October 2 to improve coordination of fatherhood initiatives.

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New Mexico
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