



THE LOOP

A COLLECTION OF STORIES FROM AROUND CALIFORNIA

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WestCare Family,

It is my distinct honor to welcome you to this exciting new issue of the WestCare California Loop with a message of hope, resilience, and support - specifically for the countless inspiring, strong, and talented women that I am so proud to call my sisters in this mission to "be the change" and make the world a better place one day at a time through the important work that we are so lucky to be able to do.

March is **Women's History Month**, and there's no better month to make a difference than this one. Although it can sometimes feel like we're going backwards, women have made remarkable strides by coming together and demanding action throughout history and this year has been no different.

This week, we continued acknowledging Women's History Month with **International Women's Day** on Monday, March 8, celebrating their theme, "Choose to Challenge." From the International Women's Day organization, this year's theme recognizes: *"A challenged world is an alert world. Individually, we're all responsible for our own thoughts and actions - all day, every day."*

We can all choose to challenge and call out gender bias and inequality. We can all choose to seek out and celebrate women's achievements. Collectively, we can all help create an inclusive world. From challenge comes change, so let's all choose to challenge.

While there is no doubt that our male colleagues struggle with their own predisposed scripts be it by maintaining a sense of masculinity and locking away emotions behind a ruggedly stoic exterior or the pressure to continue their family's legacy by becoming a father, some days with an even broader array of expectations that is put on us, it is just simply hard to be a woman. It is hard to be a single mother who is supporting her household while also working a full-time job and giving her all. It is hard to not crack when told that she "should smile more." It is hard to hold her head high in the wake of life-changing circumstances from divorce and heartbreak to the loss of a child or the inability to bare one of her own. It is hard to be the target of unwanted

advances and to walk alone in the dark. It is hard to see a mother dedicate herself to sheltering-in-place for over two weeks during a program's quarantine and be away from her little ones all because she knows that the result of that sacrifice will only benefit them more - and sisters, I have seen this sacrifice and I applaud you. It is hard to laugh off comments from male colleagues about her lack of makeup on a day when she just simply wasn't feeling it or remarks about how she should dye her hair because the grey is starting to show. But, through our cracks, our closed door self-talks, and our silent tears - there is a strength that is unmatched and a will that is unrelenting.

However, it is empowering to see our sisters in this field rise to new heights and achieve their dreams. It is inspiring to see mothers with their little ones enter into treatment, just to see them both employed there years later. It is rewarding to see hope in the eyes of our new sisters in recovery as they attend their first group and the joy in the eyes of children when they experience the splendor that is a newly sober mother. It is humbling to see women serve for our country despite the challenges that they might face not from their adversaries, but their colleagues in arms. It is promising to work in this field and see other women of color hold positions of leadership and it is gratifying to see newcomers dip their toes into this oh-so important work on their first day of employment. I am here for it, and I am here for all of you.

It has been said that you don't have to be blood to be family and at the core of my soul, I most definitely consider WestCare my family. To my brothers who are trying to break the mold that has made the need for a designated month and day dedicated to women so important, thank you and to my sisters...

Stay strong and remember that [you will always be enough](#),



Gabriela Espinosa-McNiel
Vice President of Marketing & Communications



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Program Spotlight: SAMHSA Youth and Family TREE

WestCare California, Inc.'s **SAMHSA Youth and Family TREE (Treatment and Recovery Enhancement and Expansion)** program works with youth and families in or around Kings County to ensure that a substance use disorder won't stand in the way of achieving their goals or living a healthy, happy, and fulfilling life.

SAMHSA Youth and Family TREE is an outpatient treatment program with evidence-based curriculum geared for adolescents ages 12 to 18 who have a substance use or co-occurring mental health disorder. The length of care is a minimum of six months, but the total length of treatment varies based on individual need.

Their primary services include treatment, case management, referrals, and aftercare. Additionally, they can provide linkages to residential and/or outpatient treatment for family members with a substance use disorder as well as vocational and housing assistance for families. Program referrals can come from an individual looking to enter the program themselves, their family, juvenile courts, or Kings County schools.

Kudos to the Amazing Staff of Family TREE

"The team unity has been awesome since we recently began. From scrubbing floors to hanging up pictures and everything in between, we have developed a welcoming space for our clients. We are all excited and have started reaching out to the community to let them know that SAMHSA Youth and Family TREE is here and ready to serve!"

– **Barbara Holland**, Program Coordinator, SAMHSA Youth and Family TREE

The staff of SAMHSA Youth and Family TREE are currently seeking new or lightly used donations of:

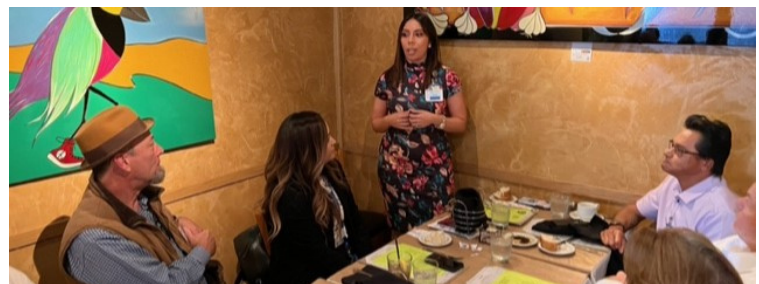
- A Keurig coffee maker
- A refrigerator
- A microwave

If you would like to make a donation, please call 559-584-8100



2.22 - MLK Celebrates Black History with a Soulful Meal

To celebrate **Black History Month**, WestCare California's **MLK Residential** staff and clients enjoyed a plate of soul food for lunch on February 22. The plate included fried chicken, mac and cheese, green beans, collard greens, cornbread, banana pudding, and a soft drink. Thank you to our amazing chef, **Ms. Charlene Washington**, for making this delicious meal possible!



3.8 - SJVV Spreads the Word Across Fresno County!

On March 8, our **San Joaquin Valley Veterans (SJVV)** team in Fresno was busy sharing about the many services that they offer at two different events!

In the morning, SJVV reached out to local Veterans about our employment services and current career opportunities with WestCare California as part of the Veterans Employment Panel presented by the **Clovis Veterans Memorial District**. The purpose of the event was to help Veterans and their families with the application and hiring process. Attendees were encouraged to bring their own laptop and be prepared with copies of required documents. The **Fresno County Library** provided laptops for those without access to a personal one. Transportation arrangements to the event were also available at no cost.

At lunchtime, our Program Director of Veteran Services Angelita Edwards provided a wonderful presentation on our services to members of **Kiwanis Club of Fresno** and the community during the week's meeting at **Max's Bistro & Bar**!

Thank you for your service and advocacy for our brave heroes!



**2.23 - 25 - The
2022 Fresno
Madera Homeless
PIT Count**

WestCare California staff on behalf of Housing Services, San Joaquin Valley Veterans (SJV), The Living Room, BEAT, leadership, and marketing joined over two hundred volunteers in this year's homeless **Point-In-Time Count** presented by the **Fresno Madera Continuum of Care (FMCoc)**. Over the course of the three-day event, volunteers tallied and surveyed individuals experiencing homelessness in Fresno and Madera Counties to provide the collected information to the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and show the need for more services in our community geared towards ending homelessness among Veterans, families, and the chronically homeless. We'd like to thank our staff who put in long nights to meet and speak with our brothers and sisters on the streets as well as those on our team who played a part in organizing this crucial event!



THANK YOU *for all you do*

On March 4, all across the golden state, from meals to potlucks and heartfelt thank you cards, we saw many unique gestures from our programs in celebration of Employee Appreciation Day! While our mission of Uplifting the Human Spirit, certainly drives us in providing the various services that we do, we simply would not be able to do this work if it weren't for the many talented, passionate, empathetic, creative, and absolutely amazing staff that we are so proud to employ!

To our dedicated WestCare California Family, we hope that you had a wonderful day while still continuing to change lives and creating positive change within our communities!





2.17 - SAMHSA HOPE at Fresno City College Receives a Spotlight for Their Services

Wire article as published through [The FCC Rampage](#) by Valerie Lo

From couch surfing, living in shelters and living out on the streets, many students at Fresno City College are currently struggling to keep a roof over their head.

FCC offers multiple resources to help students who are facing housing insecurities. [Housing Opportunities Promote Education \(HOPE\)](#) is an on-campus academic support program that helps homeless and housing unstable students achieve their educational goals.

The requirement for this program is for students to be enrolled in at least 9 units.

Students are allowed to take classes at any [State Center Community College District](#) campus, but must receive their financial aid package through FCC to qualify.

The program allows students to be eligible for up to 12 months of housing assistance.

HOPE has served 177 students since January 2021, with 49 of them currently housed. The goal is to welcome 50 more students into their housing facilities.

According to HOPE program coordinator Natalie Chavez, FCC was not expecting an influx of demand. "At one point we had a 300 person waiting list," she said.

HOPE partnered with [WestCare California](#) to help provide students with substance abuse counseling and mental health support. There are currently 47 students enrolled in this part of the program that are also being housed by HOPE.

FCC received two grants for the HOPE program last year totaling \$4.1 million.

A grant for \$2.1 million came from the [California Chancellor's Office of Community Colleges](#), which has been awarded to HOPE for a pilot program that also includes 13 other community colleges.

[Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration \(SAMHSA\)](#) also granted the HOPE program \$2 million to help house and benefit homeless individuals.

FCC has become one of the first community colleges in the country to receive this grant.

[RH Community Builders](#), a private real-estate developer and [Fresno EOC](#) are partnering with HOPE to help students facilitate housing.

The goal for HOPE is to help students prepare for 100% rental responsibilities six months after they leave the program.

By 2024, HOPE plans to have 300 apartments available for students with housing insecurity.

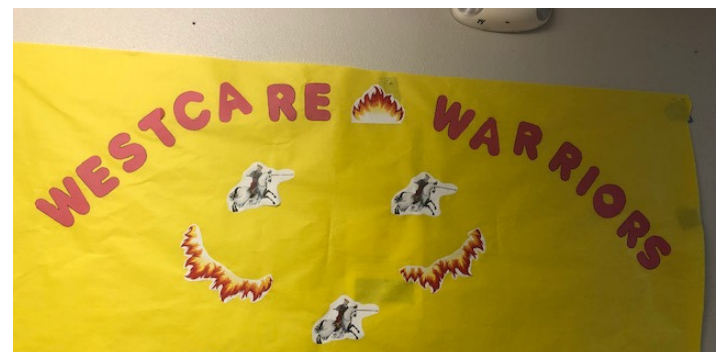
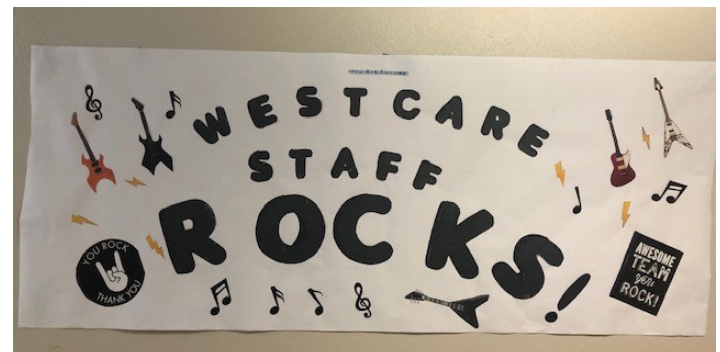
For additional information or to apply, contact Natalie Chavez at natalie.chavez@fresnocitycollege.edu.

Kudos



Jennifer Childers, [Women's Coordinator](#) and Ashlee Vasquez, [Facilitator, MLK Residential](#)

We'd like to thank Jennifer for sharing this adorable photo of her grandson, Elliot, whose mother, Ashlee Vasquez, also works at WestCare! In Jennifer's words, he just might be a "Future WestCare employee," which truly brings a whole new meaning when we proudly say, "WestCare Family!"



Connect with us in California

Get in touch with our Marketing Department to learn more about what is happening in WestCare California at marketing@westcare.com