



# Behavioral Health News

A quarterly newsletter relating activities of the Kings County Behavioral Health Agency .

Abraham Valencia, Editor

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## SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- Circle of the Horse
- Festival of Hope 2011
- Pets and Mental Health
- Patient's Rights Advocate
- Universal Screenings

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## Youth Transitions Innovation Program

Behavioral Health is proud to announce the newest program to our agency. This innovative program, called "The Circle of the Horse" is an Equine Assisted learning and therapy program for Tachi Yokut Native American youth attending **Central Union School**, in addition to other students exhibiting at risk behaviors. This approach improves communication, self esteem, listening, trust, and concentration. Infusion of cultural enrichment activities provided by the Tribal Cultural Department will strengthen the bond between the child and his/her family and tribe. The program establishes a Learning Council (ILC) made up of **Behavioral Health** staff, **Central Union School** staff, **Tachi Yokut tribal service providers** and the **Contracted Equine Facilitated Psychotherapy provider**.





# National Take Back Day

By Cella Nichols

On **October 29**, from 10:00 AM until 2:00 PM Deputies from the **Kings County Sheriff's Department** and Cella Nichols, Prevention Coordinator, will set up tables in front of the Sheriff's Pet Adoption Center at the Hanford Mall for **National Take Back Day**. National Take Back Day was created as a result of the alarming rates of abuse and addiction of prescription medications. It is an issue for adults and adolescents alike, and is now the second most abused drug behind marijuana and continuing to increase. Much of the reason is due to easy accessibility such as the medicine cabinets at home. Due to doctor hopping, many are able to get prescriptions from various doctors who have no knowledge that their patient already visited several other doctors.

Awareness is growing, however, and even the doctors at Adventist Health have changed their prescription refill policy, refusing to refill a prescription unless you make an appointment to be seen. You must take in the original bottles to your appointment and verify that it was your personal doctor that provided your prescription. They no longer take telephone requests for refills from their patients or faxed refill requests.

National Take Back Day is an event where the public can bring all unused prescription medications and dispose of them, no questions asked. This service is free. There are receptacles that the pills, creams, and liquids are placed into and secured. After the event is completed, the receptacles are transported to Sacramento where they are incinerated and destroyed. Sacramento is the location for counties in northern California, while southern California has several locations for the incineration process. This is a national program and events are held 2-3 times per year in towns, cities, and counties nationwide.

I was able to participate in a previous Take Back Day in Hanford, and I found it interesting that many who brought medications to drop off were elderly. Sometimes they had several bulging bags of medications, giving some verification to the often stated idea that we are a country that over-prescribes, especially to the elderly.

If you have prescription medications in your home that are old or unused, bring them out on **Saturday, October 29th** and dispose of them properly. Do not flush them down the toilet or throw them in the garbage. Enjoy this free service and know that you did your part in protecting your family from this growing and possibly fatal epidemic.

*Turn in  
your  
unused or  
expired  
medication  
for safe  
disposal this  
Saturday,  
October  
29th*

**Got Drugs?**  
Turn in your unused or expired medication for safe disposal  
Saturday, October 29<sup>th</sup>

Visit [www.dea.gov](http://www.dea.gov)  
or call 800-882-9539  
for a collection  
site near you

**LIVING DRUG FREE**

Red Ribbon Week  
October 23 - 31

For more information, please visit [www.dea.gov](http://www.dea.gov)

## Pets and Mental Wellness by Pamela Fellows

I love, love, love my pets. For me, the unconditional love and acceptance I receive from them is irreplaceable. Just petting their head or having them curl up next to me makes me feel good. I can talk to them and they listen, at least I think they do. They seem to know when I am having a difficult day or when I am feeling blue. These warm and “fuzzies” have also been proven to reduce stress, a common source of mental health problems. Although pets cannot cure mental illness or replace medication or therapeutic interventions, they can help ease loneliness and isolation. They accept us for who we are and do not judge us. They also help us stay connected with other people by providing us with a topic of conversation and by giving us something we have in common with many other people. Just stroking and cuddling with a pet is therapeutic. Pets can help in relieving stress and anxiety. We are also likely to laugh and be more playful when we share our home with a pet. Pet owners are generally more active. The exercise we get from walking, feeding, and grooming a pet keeps our minds healthy. Moreover, caring for a pet provides a predictable routine and link to reality. If the conditions are right, pets can help our mental wellness.



## New Patient’s Rights Advocate

The role of a Patient’s Rights Advocate (PRA) is to ensure persons with a mental illness have the same legal rights and responsibilities that all other persons are afforded by the Federal Constitution and laws of the United States, and the Constitution and laws of the State of California (WIC 5325.1).

Patient’s Rights Advocates support persons with a mental illness in voicing their concerns in an ethical and professional manner. PRA’s can and will investigate any claim, grievance, or complaint of harm and/or wrongdoing against individuals with a mental illness in order to reserve and protect the rights of those individuals. Ultimately, the goal is to resolve matters so that individuals feel safe, humane, and secure and that their overall health and wellbeing is treated with the utmost respect.

If you have any questions regarding PRA, please contact the new Kings County Patient’s Rights Advocate, Pamela Fellows, for further information at 559-852-2436.



Pam Fellows, PRA



## Support for our Veterans by Devondria Sanchez & Mario Lopez

*“As we express our gratitude, we must never forget that the highest appreciation is not to utter words, but to live by them”. ~John Fitzgerald Kennedy.*

Although being a military service member is an honorable career, it comes with a cost. Family sacrifices, constant transitions, rigid structure, and personal safety all are part of the job description of our prior and present veterans.

Our community has long felt the support of military services members. Kings County Behavioral Health has launched its second 10 week **Veteran’s Trauma Group** and, within the last month, created the **Veteran’s Support Group**. Both groups serve different functions with the same idea at hand....THE VETERANS! The Veteran’s Support Group meets on a biweekly basis, which serves to provide veterans with information, guest speakers, camaraderie, and sharing of universal experiences. On the other hand, the Trauma Group serves as a therapeutic intervention to address topics such as: stress management, insomnia, anger, and reintegration with family, friends, and society.

Contact Behavioral Health for information regarding the Veteran’s Support Group and/or Veteran’s Trauma Group. Helping Kings County’s Military Service Members break through silence. 559-852-2435

# Festival of Hope 2011

*On October 8-9, Tulare and Kings Counties held the 2nd Annual **Festival of Hope** at the **Tulare Outlet Center**. The **Tulare and Kings Counties Suicide Prevention Task Force** was created with the purpose of saving lives in our communities by preventing suicide. The Festival of Hope event featured a variety of elements to engage and inform our community. Those who attended enjoyed a positive atmosphere filled with breath-taking chalk murals created by professional and volunteer artists. Free live concerts filled the air with exhilarating music. Among this year's main attractions were local favorites **Poor Man's Poison** and nationally recognized **Matt&Kim**. Diverse performances featured beautiful cultural music and dancing. Local resources were presented to provide information about services that can transform lives. Through these activities, the focus was to bring hope to those in our community and put resources into the hands of people who need them. All activities were free and everyone was encouraged to participate. We **hope** to see you there next year. For more information see [www.sptf.org](http://www.sptf.org)*





# Universal Screenings

Wellness and Empowerment for Children and Adolescent Network

KINGS COUNTY BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

Universal Screenings are an essential first step to identifying issues early. With consent from the parents/guardians, **WE CAN** will use the following assessment tools:

## **Ages and Stages Questions-Social Emotional (3 - 66 months):**

Parents and caregivers are screened about the child's development. Improves early identification and more timely referrals intervention.

**Pediatric Symptoms Checklist for Children (6 - 16 years):** Uses specific descriptions of child's behaviors and emotions. Parents are consulted to ensure the best possible answers were given .

**Signs Of Suicide (middle & high school):** Used when signs of self harm or risk of suicide are identified. Will be available for middle and high school students.



If you are interested in one of the above screenings, please contact Elizabeth Barrera or Rosaura Heredia, Recovery Support Coordinators, at 852-2385 or 852-2441.

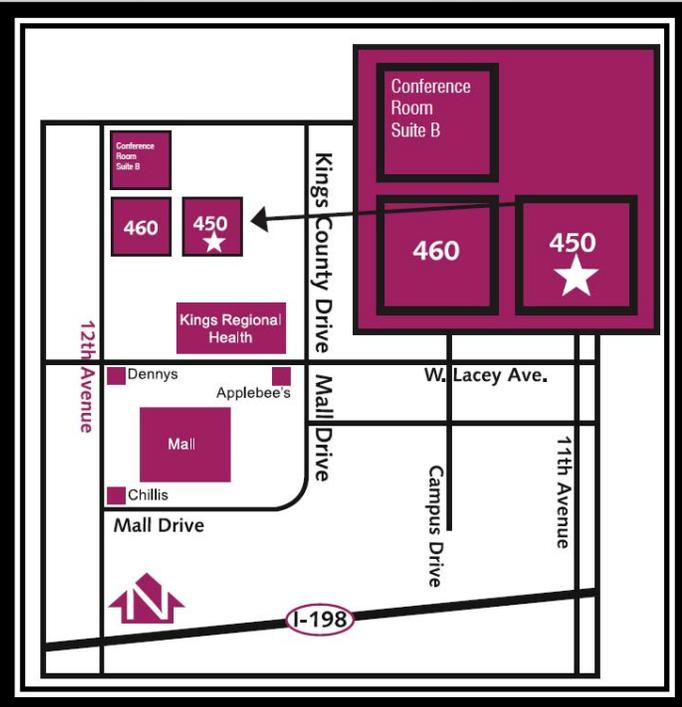


450 Kings County Dr. Suite 104  
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559-852-2376

"To promote, support, and invest in the wellness and recovery of individuals living in the communities of Kings County by creating opportunities to contribute, learn, work, and find hope in each day."

# “Recovery Benefits Everyone” SoberFest 2011

This was the theme for this year’s *SoberFest*, an event that Kings County celebrated in September, National Recovery Month. Several hundred people attended the event which focused on celebrating people's recovery from addictions. If you support an addiction free community and wish to encourage people to recover, then make sure you attend next year’s *SoberFest*, scheduled for 2012's Labor Day weekend.



## Find Us

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[www.kingscountybehavioralhealth.com](http://www.kingscountybehavioralhealth.com)