

Regional Pursuits

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LRGVDC HURRICANE DOLLY DISASTER RECOVERY HOUSING PROGRAM GROUNDBREAKING CEREMONY

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Thursday, October 30th the San Benito Housing & Development Corporation held a Groundbreaking Ceremony for the Stone Village Housing Development Project located at 1301 Victoria Street. Stone Village will be a Multi-Family Rental Housing Development with 50 units and a community center. Six (6) of the fifty (50) units will be built for physically handicapped individuals. The San Benito Housing Authority was awarded \$3,750,000 in Disaster Recovery Multi-Family Project funds by the LRGVDC. The total cost of the project is \$5,000,000.



Pictured l-r: Kyle Orgera (First Community Bank), John Pearcy (Megamorphosis), Arnold Padilla (SBHA), Ruben Rodriguez (Hollis Rutledge & Assoc.), Lauro Leal (SBHA Chairman), Brad Hubbard (URS), Kenneth N. Jones, Jr. (LRGVDC), Mayor Celeste Z. Sanchez (City of San Benito), Elma Barrera (SBHA Board Member), Juan E. Rivera (SBHA Board Member), Sandee Alvarez (HAC Member), Mayor Pro-Tem Antonio Gonzales (City of San Benito), Manuel Lara (City Manager, City of San Benito), and William Sullivan (SLS).



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from the LRGVDC Board of Directors and Staff

Valley Environmental Summit 2014

The 5th Annual Valley Environmental Summit (VES) was held on Thursday, October 9th at the Brownsville Event Center. The summit is headed by State Rep. Eddie Lucio, III in partnership with the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) and other local organizations. The purpose of the VES is to bring together the general public, political leaders, neighborhood associations, non-profit organizations, businesses, and students to identify possible solutions and discuss ways to improve the Texas environment.

The VES was the climax of a planning process that began October 2009, for the purpose of education and negotiations among all members of the steering committee, leading to the culmination of the 5th Annual VES. The VES addressed the relationship between communities, social development and the need for environmentally sustainable development. The VES once again underscored the need for a healthy environment.



With over 300 in attendance, this year's VES was once again a great success. Attendees represented Cameron, Hidalgo and Willacy counties, schools and other interested organizations. This year the keynote speaker was Senator Wendy Davis. There were three (3) breakout sessions to discuss what each one of us can do to improve our environment, which included such topics as: disposal of household hazardous waste, scrap tires, sustainability and code compliance issues in relation to illegal dumping. At these breakout sessions the participants learned about local environmental issues and discussed potential solutions.

The VES Committee strives to engage the participation of the Valley's youth. These efforts included an environmental educational track, and a specifically designed forum for student participation. A fabulous and fun "Trashion Show" was also presented by the Green Teams from Veteran's Memorial High School, Rivera High School and Saint Joseph Academy from Brownsville.



"Trashion Show" participants from the following schools: Veteran's Memorial High School, Rivera Early College High School and Saint Joseph Academy. Trashion materials used: recycled crafts, newspaper, magazines, plastic and paper bags.

VES Mission Statement:
*Identify environmental issues
potential solutions, and promote
a synergy between the
community and elected officials.*



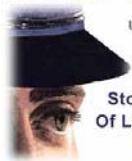
VES Steering Committee Members (from left to right): Gabriela Saucedo (Cameron County), Imelda Peña (TCEQ), Omar Rios (City of Harlingen), Esmer Tovias (TCEQ), Grace Segovia (City of Pharr), State Rep. Eddie Lucio, III; Quina Rutledge (Volunteer), Ludy Saenz (LRGVDC), and Valerie Ramos (LRGVDC).

LRGVDC Regional Police Academy and Training Center Quarterly Update

The American workplace has become a place of violence from current employees to former employees, as well as from persons related to current or former employees. Recognizing this trend and the need to address this issue, the LRGVDC Regional Police Academy (RPA), under the direction of Executive Director Kenneth N. Jones, Jr., developed a *Response to Workplace Violence and Response to Active Shooter for Non-Law Enforcement Personnel* course, which is approximately 1.5 hours long. LRGVDC RPA staff will present the course at no charge to requesting agencies. Since the development of the course, the LRGVDC RPA staff has presented the material to LRGVDC Employees, the LRGVDC Board of Directors, and the San Benito CISD Principals and Assistant Principals. Please contact the LRGVDC RPA via phone at (956) 364-4507 or via email at pwilliams@lrgvc.org if you are interested in hosting the program at your facility.



TEARS OF A COP



UNDER PRESSURE
Stop The Statistics
Of Law Enforcement
PTSD & Suicide

The LRGVDC RPA is working with Modern View Clinical & Forensic Services regarding post traumatic stress disorder for peace officers. The goal is to enhance training regarding this topic in the Crisis Intervention course, which is part of the Basic Peace Officer Certification course and in the Mental Health Officer and Police Suicide Detention, Prevention and Intervention courses. Ironically, police officers are statistically more apt to harm themselves than be feloniously killed while on duty; however, until the LRGVDC RPA drafted the Police Suicide Detention, Prevention and Intervention course, there was no comprehensive training on police suicide.

As of 1/1/2015 all peace officers must complete the Missing and Exploited Children course to attain either their intermediate or advanced peace officer proficiency certificate. The course was developed by TxDPS and approved by TCOLE. The LRGVDC RPA has listed the course on the training calendar starting in 2015 since the course cannot be reported for credit until 1/1/2015 or later: 1/23/2015, 2/9/2015 and 3/10/2015. More sections will be added based on demand.

The Missing and Exploited Children course is slated by TCOLE for four (4) hours. At the recent Training Coordinator's Conference in Corpus Christi, many training coordinators asked that the maximum reportable hours be increased to allow for better coverage of the required material. TCOLE has increased the reporting hours as a result of those concerns. The LRGVDC RPA has scheduled the course in eight (8) hour sessions.



A Journey to Better Health

In June the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) re-certified the LRGVDC's Community-based Care Transition Program (CCTP) to continue guiding our Valley families toward the goal of better health care through its partnership with 10 Valley hospitals. CMS states that nearly one in five Medicare patients discharged from a hospital, approximately 2.6 million beneficiaries, are readmitted within 30-days at a cost of over \$26 billion dollars a year (CMS 2010 Medicare statistics). The goal of the CCTP project is to achieve a 20% reduction in readmissions of high risk Medicare –A patients for all hospital partnerships for 30-days after being released (CMS-National Hospital Readmission statistics).

Our Program to date has enrolled close to 9,000 participants and has reduced readmissions across all hospital partnerships to 18.6% from a baseline of 20.3% over a 24 month time span. 2014 has brought new challenges as well as new partners to aid in the battle of chronic illness. Through learning collaboration we have grown and adapted to the ever changing and challenging needs of our Valley families. Learning Sessions are held quarterly and all Care Transition Programs throughout the United States gather to share ideas and best practices.

Another partner in the continuum of care is the Texas Medical Foundation (TMF), a Quality Improvement Organization that offers technical assistance to the Care Transition Programs in their area. TMF will be working with our program to offer very specific training opportunities to Rio Grande Valley post acute care providers who are also project partners with the Care Transition project. TMF will be coordinating their quarterly meeting with ours and assisting the Care Transition Program to meet the readmission reduction goal set forth by CMS.

Empowering our Valley families through health literacy and chronic illness management will prove to be the missing pieces in the puzzle that is health care.





RIO-Net ADRC Participates in “Boots on Ground” Veterans’ Memorial Endurance Mud Run



On Saturday morning November 8th, many brave individuals gathered at the Los Fresnos Rodeo Grounds to take part in the “Boots on Ground” Veterans’ Memorial Endurance Mud Run. The event was coordinated by the City of Los Fresnos and featured a 5K, 10K, and Kid’s Run. It had various obstacle courses through which all participants had to maneuver. Parts of one course featured a wall climb, climbing over a semi-trailer bed, crawling through mud, and the last but not least all participants had to jump into a pool of icy water!

RIO-Net ADRC (Aging and Disability Resource Center) was a proud sponsor of the Veterans’ Memorial Endurance Mud Run this year. All proceeds raised by this worthwhile event will be used to build a memorial for all veterans in the City of Los Fresnos. One of the highlights of the RIO-Net ADRC’s sponsorship was having a veteran participate in the Mud Run on behalf of the department. Mr. Abraham Vela is a Staff Sergeant with the Marines and served 2 tours, one in Iraq and one in Afghanistan. While deployed with the Marines Mr. Vela was a Border Transport Operator-Convey Security Guard. He is also married to RIO-Net ADRC staff member, Karla Quintero-Vela from Weslaco. When asked what Mr. Vela thought about the course he said, “That was longer and muddier than I thought!” RIO-Net ADRC had a booth set-up at the event to educate the community about the various resources provided through RIO-Net ADRC.

When asked if the “Boots on Ground” Veterans’ Memorial Endurance Mud Run was a success, Mrs. Celine Gonzalez, Coordinator of the event and Finance Director for the City of Los Fresnos stated, “The event was a success, from the Facebook posts and social media everyone enjoyed themselves. We honored our veterans and hopefully raised some money for the Veterans’ Memorial.” She also mentioned that well over 600 individuals registered and completed the course. A new area of focus this year for RIO-Net ADRC is to identify the needs and resources for Veterans in the local community. In the upcoming months RIO-Net ADRC will conduct a survey to gather local statistics on Veterans’ needs in order to identify proper funding.



The 3 people being photographed l-r are: Karla Quintero-Vela, RIO-Net ADRC Staff member; Staff Sgt. Abraham Vela; and a fellow Mud Run participant.

Walk to End Alzheimer’s 2014



TEAM C.O.R.E. (Caring for those with Respite and Education) L-R : Dora Moreno, Denise Wylie, Marilu Fuentes, Vivianna Moreno, Noemi Rodriguez, Veronica Alegria.

LRGVDC’s Area Agency on Aging staff came together to participate in the Alzheimer’s Association Annual Walk to End Alzheimer’s awareness events. This year the Alzheimer’s Association hosted two walks in the RGV. The first walk was held on November 8th at Texas Southmost College in Brownsville and the second walk was held November 15th at the Edinburg Conference Center at DHR in Edinburg. Close to 700 people attended and participated in the Walk to End Alzheimer’s. In an effort to raise money staff held a raffle, sold chicken salad plates, sold snacks and received generous donations from family and friends. In three weeks the Area Agency on Aging staff raised \$600 to help with research, education and training, and support services for caregivers.

The color of the flowers held by TEAM C.O.R.E. have significance: yellow is for someone caring for somebody with Alzheimer’s; orange signifies support of those with Alzheimer’s; purple signifies someone who has lost a loved one to Alzheimer’s; and blue (not pictured) is for someone diagnosed with Alzheimer’s.



These shirts, worn in the above photo, were designed by TEAM C.O.R.E. in honor and memory of their loved ones affected by Alzheimer’s disease



Age Well - Live Well Senior Fall Formal



In the spirit of promoting healthy living, 12 couples competed for 1st place in a dance contest.

LRGVDC's Area Agency on Aging in collaboration with Texas Department of Aging & Disability Services, HEB, Cigna-HealthSprings, Caregiver S O S Wellmed, and the City of McAllen held the "Age Well - Live Well Senior Fall Formal" on Saturday, October 11th at the Palmview Community Center in McAllen.

Approximately 150 seniors attended and twelve couples participated in the dance contest. The top three dance couples received trophies sponsored by Caregiver S O S Wellmed and HEB refreshments.



All who attended received information on Medicare, Medicaid, provider services, extra help with prescription costs, Medicare fraud, Adult Protective Services, assistance for caregivers, and other related areas of interest.



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