

Message From The President

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Eric Bencomo
President
SF HAAC

SF HAAC Members,

Springtime is a time for renewal. As we enjoy the beauty/newness of the outside world embarking on those much needed spring vacations, it is also a perfect time to reflect and reassess your career. I challenge each of you to ask yourselves: "What are my career aspirations?"

"Success is not based on title nor position, but rather the self-gratification of making society a better place." — Anonymous

As public servants, we are instrumental in providing the best possible public service to the American public. Critical to our mission is our ability to remain vigilant in passionately pursuing this endeavor.

If you're ready to take on greater responsibility within the agency, I encourage you to take a proactive approach by reaching out to your supervisor/management team. Your supervisors' feedback is paramount as it can provide valuable insight on areas of strength as well as developmental needs. Additionally, I encourage you to consider volunteering in the community as a means of gaining valuable developmental experience. You may also wish to consider taking courses through the agency's Learning Management System (LMS) or at the local community college level.

Do you have a mentor? A mentor is someone whose knowledge and experience you respect and whose wisdom and expertise can support your professional growth and development. When it comes to work, everyone needs advice. Whether you're not sure how to tackle an assignment or want to talk through an interesting development opportunity, there's nothing better than having a few mentors help you out along the way. If you don't have an idea about who to ask to be your mentor, I suggest participating in next year's SF HAAC Mentorship Program or, perhaps, one of the Mentorship Programs of our sibling advisory councils.

On behalf of the SF HAAC Executive Council, I would like to extend our sincere thanks to each of you for supporting SF HAAC. We are working diligently to provide our members with more programs and opportunities for career development. As we turn the corner from spring to summer, there is much more to come, so please be on the lookout for upcoming SF HAAC events in your area.

Eric Bencomo
SF HAAC President

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2013 Mentorship Program

SF HAAC is proud to present the participants in the 2013 Mentorship Program! The following is a brief introduction to this year's participants.

Jennifer Shaw, Management Analyst in the Cal Central ADO; 4 ½ years with the agency. *As of April 15th, promoted to CR. Congrats!*



- *What motivated you to take control of your career?*
The need for change motivated me to take control of my career. I finally realized that if you do what you've always done, you'll get what you always have gotten. It was time for me to stop doing what I had always done and start doing something different. I also want to set a good example for my son so that he knows he can do anything he wants to as long as he is dedicated and hard-working.
- *What do you expect to get from the Mentorship Program?*
I expect to gain a wealth of knowledge from my mentor as well as other SF HAAC members. I also expect that this program will provide me with an invaluable experience that will keep me motivated in the future. I hope that I am able to establish many long-lasting relationships from participating in this program. I know that I will only get out as much as I put in, so I plan to fully devote myself to it!
- *Any additional things you are currently working on to help your self-development?*
I recently learned the secret art of couponing. This has helped me to buy a lot of material resources that I am able to donate to local charities. I love being able to help people at work and outside of work!

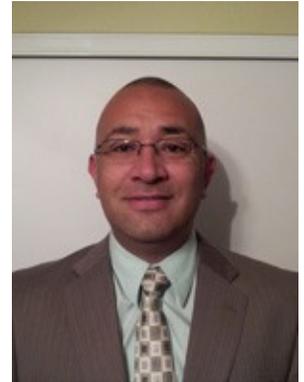
Ernesto Ruiz, Service Representative, Huntington Park DO; 4 years with the agency.



- *What motivated you to take control of your career?*
I want more out of my career with the agency as well as an opportunity to grow. I have not reached the place where I want to be and I want to take the steps necessary to get there.
- *What do you expect to get from the Mentorship Program?*
I expect to gain valuable help as well as the tools necessary to get me to the point where I want to be in my career. In addition, I expect to grow as an individual, learn more about myself, better myself, and follow a plan which will help me achieve this successfully.
- *Any additional things you are currently working on to help your self-development?*
I plan to volunteer my time for community events for the remainder of the year and take advantage of LMS and other training resources.

2013 Mentorship Program (Cont.)

Dante H. Gonzales, T16 Claims Representative, Oceanside DO; 9 years with the agency.



- *What motivated you to take control of your career?*
My motivation comes from my family. I understand my claimants because I also have a disabled family member at home and that makes me more understanding of others. I am interested in increasing my knowledge and abilities to better assist others in creating a more enjoyable and productive workplace. I believe that if we love what we do, we are more apt to motivate others. I enjoy helping others because I believe that we are only as strong as our weakest link. If we all help and teach each other to work smarter and as a team, we will better enjoy what we do, and be stronger as a unit. I have attended various trainings and seminars and one thing that they all have in common is to not get comfortable in your comfort zone. We need to step out of our comfort zone and rise to any new challenges to be able to gain confidence in ourselves and have others see our true worth under pressure.
- *What do you expect to get from the Mentorship Program?*
Through the Mentorship Program, I plan to sharpen my skills and knowledge and learn to better utilize them to assist others. I hope that through networking and group sharing, I can learn aspects of other areas that I have never had the opportunity to participate in.
- *Any additional things you are currently working on to help your self-development?*
For self-development, I have started to take on-line classes at home through the LMS website and my local community college. I have also talked to my supervisor and have initiated an IDP program at my home office. I enjoy reading and I actively volunteer through church to help families from the community.

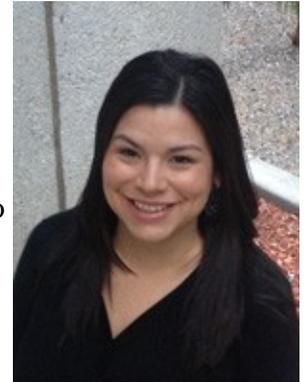
Elia Diaz-Guevara, T16 Technical Expert, El Monte FO; 13 years with the agency.



- *What motivated you to take control of your career?*
I have held several positions, from Claims representative, Operations Supervisor in the Los Angeles District office, and a detail as Assistant District Manager in the Pomona field office. What motivated me was that it was time to take control of my career. My goal is to become a manager of a field office.
- *What do you expect to get from the Mentorship Program?*
I am confident this Mentorship Program will guide me in the right direction to accomplish my goals.
- *Any additional things you are currently working on to help your self-development?*
Currently, I volunteer at my son's little league baseball association as a coach mom.

2013 Mentorship Program (Cont.)

Maria Erives, Teleservice Representative, Phoenix TSC; 3 ½ years with the agency.



- What motivated you to take control of your career?*
My desire of leading others, advancing and continuing self-development and training courses has motivated me to take control of my career. I feel that my time is now to prepare for future advancements in the agency. My fiancé and two year-old son also motivate me to reach for success.
- What do you expect to get from the Mentorship Program?*
I expect and feel that the Mentorship Program will provide the tools I need to research all that the agency has to offer and help me take advantage of the many resources that exist to prepare me for future advancement. I expect it will also point me in the direction of community involvement and utilizing other resources outside the agency to assist in my self-development. I am confident that, with my mentor on my side, we will be able to polish areas where I need improvement in order to lead and direct in the future.
- Any additional things you are currently working on to help your self-development?*
Currently I have been working on my 45, reading books and audio CDs on areas I feel need extra attention (e.g., communication, active listening and leading). I am also currently taking classes on LMS and working on involving myself more in my local community.

Pablo Ubago, T16 Claims Representative, Watts DO; 9 years with the agency.



- What motivated you to take control of your career?*
I am very excited to have been selected to be part of the SF HAAC mentoring program this year. What motivated me to take control of my career was that there is always room for improvement and that I am ready to accept more responsibilities at work.
- What do you expect to get from the Mentorship Program?*
My expectations from the mentoring program are to enhance my job knowledge, grow professionally and, most importantly, to develop a lasting professional relationship with my mentor.
- Any additional things you are currently working on to help your self-development?*
In the personal aspect to help me advance my career, I am currently attending California State University, Los Angeles, where I am currently working on a Master of Science Degree in Public Administration. I am enjoying grad school more than my undergrad years. Grad school is very challenging, but it is also rewarding. For those SF HAAC members that would like to participate in the mentoring program, I suggest that you apply when the opportunity is available because this can be the first step to advance your career.

2013 Mentorship Program (Cont.)

Dulce Vasquez, Claims Representative, Moreno Valley DO; 4 years with the agency.



- *What motivated you to take control of your career?*
After being with the agency for four years, I felt it was the right moment to start developing my knowledge. I am ready to learn more of what the agency has to offer as well as taking on new experiences.
- *What do you expect to get from the Mentorship Program?*
From the Mentorship Program, I expect to gain a new perspective on how to develop myself as a Public Servant. I hope to learn new effective ways to help the agency and the public that we serve.

Manuel (Manny) Casillas, T2 Claims Representative, Anaheim DO; 10 ½ years with the agency.



- *What motivated you to take control of your career?*
Looking back at my career, I have been exposed to various roles of leadership. One common denominator is the need to never stop learning. I take the opportunity to learn something new every day. I found that being a good listener when receiving feedback from management and colleagues is a key to my success.
- *What do you expect to get from the Mentorship Program?*
We all have our weaknesses, but not all of us realize them, come to terms with them, or prevent their negative impact. This is why it is important to have a mentor, a manager or a colleague who can give you honest feedback. It is never too late to begin, but you have to be willing to take the feedback as constructive criticism and not personal. I am excited and committed to begin the journey with the Mentorship Program.
- *Additional things I am currently working on to help my self-development.*
In order to develop and invest in myself, I am committed to never stop learning. Whenever possible, I attend SF HAAC, PAAC and GOLD conferences. During my commute from home to my field office, I enjoy listening to audio tapes. I am a strong believer in staying positive. I believe it is better to be prepared for the opportunity than to have the opportunity and not be prepared.

Vanessa M. Gonzalez, Claims Representative, Moreno Valley DO; 4 years with the agency.



- *What motivated you to take control of your career?*
The need for development and reaching personal goals that I have set for myself motivated me to take control of my career.
- *What do you expect to get from the Mentorship Program?*
After completing the Mentorship Program, I expect to improve my knowledge and skills, which will help me advance my career with the agency.

2013 Mentorship Program (Cont.)

Caesar Gonzales, T2 Claims Representative, Hollywood DO; 4 years with the agency.



- *What motivated you to take control of your career?*
When I graduated from UC Berkeley, a Fortune 500 company hired me into their Executive Training Program. I worked there for seven years and was promoted several times; however, the company was bought out. I had been earning a great salary and then suddenly became unemployed. I had no idea the job market was going to be so difficult to traverse, since I had never had trouble finding a job before. After a lengthy job search, I was hired by the agency. The experience of being unemployed and struggling to find a new career is one of the reasons that I've been very focused on my career growth in the agency. I have enjoyed working as a Claims Representative, administering our programs and servicing the public. Additionally, I have had prior management experience and I look forward to an opportunity to contribute as a supervisor for the agency.
- *What do you expect to get from the Mentorship Program?*
I understand that each person's career path is different. However, I want to learn from my mentor the fundamentals that have contributed to his success. I would also like my mentor to assist me in targeting specific developmental projects that will prepare me for the next level. It's been great getting to know Juan Garcia and I hope to develop a solid relationship that will extend beyond the one-year duration of this program. I would not have accomplished so many things in life without the support of those around me and the SF HAAC Mentorship Program has added to the support group that will help me navigate my career.
- *Any additional things you are currently working on to help your self-development?*
Last October, I was the Keynote speaker at the Mayor's Annual Awards Breakfast for the Employment of People with Disabilities. I've participated in numerous outreach events. I have also had the opportunity to speak at the San Francisco Regional Office's Diversity Week. With regard to structured education, LMS is a great tool that has allowed me to take online classes and I plan to take additional classes. Volunteering for the Hispanic Youth Symposium at UCLA has been very rewarding and I'll continue that as well. Having a disability myself, I was eager to join CED (Council for Employees with Disabilities) and, last year, I became the Treasurer. Most recently, I was selected as the Vice-Chair for the 2013 GOLD Conference.

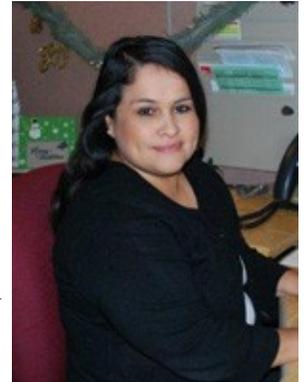
Yanira Chayrez, Service Representative, Phoenix Downtown DO; 10 years with the agency.



- *What motivated you to take control of your career?*
I thought I would try and give being a CR a shot.
- *What do you expect to get from the Mentorship Program?*
I would hope to obtain guidance as to what is needed to move up within the agency.
- *Any additional things you are currently working on to help your self-development?*
I served a 120-day detail as a TE for the SR unit. I am currently taking college courses.

2013 Mentorship Program (Cont.)

Jacqueline Mendez, Service Representative, Long Beach DO; 2 ½ years with the agency.



- *What motivated you to take control of your career?*
Since I am fairly new to the agency, I want to set my goals early on to be successful in my career.
- *What do you expect to get from the Mentorship Program?*
I believe the Mentorship Program will take me out of my comfort zone and I will gain self-confidence in areas I have difficulty with.
- *Any additional things you are currently working on to help your self-development?*
Currently, I am working on self-improvement. I have started living a healthier lifestyle and defining my financial goals. I believe these factors will reflect on my outlook on how I feel about myself and how I accomplish my goals. I enjoy reading books by Dave Ramsey and Louise Hay.

Tina Galvan, T16 Claims Representative, Moreno Valley DO; 13 years with the agency.



- *What motivated you to take control of your career?*
I was motivated to take control of my career when I was given the opportunity to do a 120-day detail in the Hemet Office. I was so impressed by the management and staff on how they were appreciative of the work I was doing that I found myself saying, “I want to do more!”
- *What do you expect to get from the Mentorship Program?*
I hope to find a road to focus on and follow to get me where I want to be.
- *Any additional things you are currently working on to help your self-development?*
I am currently in contact with the local parks and recreations center, a senior center, and the Western Science Center in Hemet as part of my community outreach efforts. I will be taking monthly online courses on LMS.

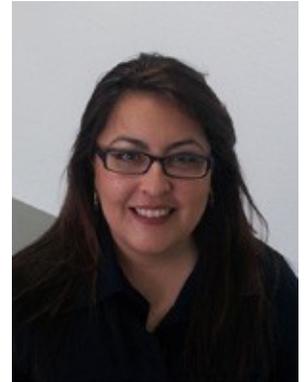
Emma Samaniego, Service Representative, Fontana DO; 5 years with the agency.



- *What motivated you to take control of your career?*
Presently, my ambition is to develop a constructive, valuable and extensive career with the agency.
- *What do you expect to get from the Mentorship Program?*
I am searching for the superior knowledge and guidance from the extremely experienced mentors. I am infinitely grateful for the patience and dedication my mentor has granted me.

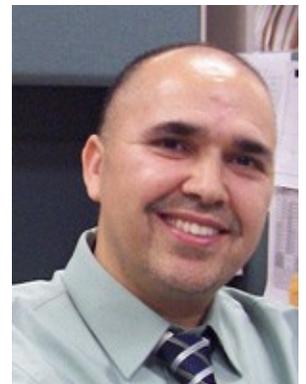
2013 Mentorship Program (Cont.)

Maricela Dumond, Claims Representative, Redlands FO; 10 years with the agency.



- *What motivated you to take control of your career?*
As an individual, I am constantly striving to leave a positive footprint in anything I do. My son's birth reinforced my commitment to take control of my future, and motivated me to push forward towards my career goals.
- *What do you expect to get from the Mentorship Program?*
As a mentee, I expect to build on my knowledge and experiences. My participation in this program will allow me to improve my skills, and shape me into a future leader in the agency. My mentor's guidance and leadership will assist me in determining how to best utilize my skills to make a positive impact on our agency.
- *Any additional things you are currently working on to help your self-development?*
In addition to my participation in the SF HAAC Mentorship Program, I had the opportunity to participate in extra-curricular events that contributed to my self-development, both at a personal and professional level. These events include the graffiti removal project in Riverside, CA, the Hispanic Youth Symposium at UCLA, and the eServices outreach event held during Fiesta Broadway in Los Angeles, CA. Furthermore, my participation in various workshops, such as the GOLD conferences and various SF HAAC-sponsored workshops, provided me with valuable tools that have motivated, educated and inspired me. As I embark on this experience, I am excited at the prospect of what the future holds. I am grateful for the opportunity to be part of the SF HAAC Mentorship Program and I look forward to my continued leadership development.

Adam Bakir, Claims Representative, Pasadena DO; 13 years with the agency.



- *What motivated you to take control of your career?*
In 2009, I had to transfer from the NY Region to the San Francisco Region due to a family hardship. As a result, I had to accept a downgrade from a Management Analyst to a Claims Representative. I have been very motivated to take control of my career since then.
- *What do you expect to get from the Mentorship Program?*
I expect to learn a lot from the Mentorship Program, especially, leadership and communication skills.
- *Any additional things you are currently working on to help your self-development?*
In addition to joining the SF HAAC and being part of the Mentorship Program, I am currently working on my IDP. As such, I am given new assignments and opportunities as part of my development. I also volunteer for any project that comes along. I am currently the lead on the Self-help PC project.

2013 Mentorship Program (Cont.)

Rudy Gonzalez, Teleservice Representative in the Los Angeles TSC; 5 years with the agency.



- *What motivated you to take control of your career?*
The main driving force that gives me the motivation to succeed within the agency has been my family. I want to provide the best for my family, give them everything I can while moving up the ladder within the agency.
- *What do you expect to get from the Mentorship Program?*
The things that I expect to gain from the Mentorship Program is insight, knowledge, and the ability to enhance both oral and written communication.
- *Any additional things you are currently working on to help your self-development?*
I am currently working on online courses through LMS. I am currently a member of the Sunshine and Holiday Committee. I help raise funds for different activities conducted in our office, such as our yearly Christmas party. I also play on the Softball Team at the LATSC.

Robert (Bob) Loewenstein, T2 Claims Representative, Riverside DO; 4 years with the agency.



- *What motivated you to take control of your career?*
I am motivated to take control of my career because I have a strong desire to lead people. As a leader within this agency, I hope to be able to improve our communication with our claimants. Improved communication would help lead to my ultimate goal of improving the public's perception of the Social Security Administration.
- *What do you expect to get from the Mentorship Program?*
I expect to improve my leadership skills through personal development and developmental opportunities. I would also like to work towards my goal of instilling a sense of urgency in the work environment through promoting teamwork and collaboration. Finally, I intend to take advantage of the networking opportunities provided by this program.
- *Any additional things you are currently working on to help your self-development?*
I recently completed my MBA degree. The knowledge and skills that I have gained through my education have already proved quite useful within this agency. I am currently serving on a detail in the internet claims unit within my field office. This position has taught me the importance of promoting eServices in order to improve the agency's efficiency. As a TII CR, I am required to have a general understanding of the TXVI program. I am studying the TXVI course material on my own in an effort to learn as much as I can about the TXVI program.

2013 Mentorship Program (Cont.)

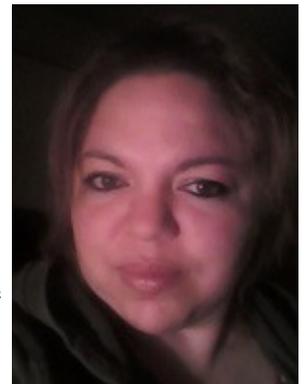
Sergio Lopez, T2 Claims Representative, Stockton DO; 5 years with the agency.

- *What motivated you to take control of your career?*
I am motivated to take control of my career by my internal drive to better myself.
- *What do you expect to get from the Mentorship Program?*
I expect to be given tools that I can use to succeed in promoting within the agency.
- *Any additional things you are currently working on to help your self-development?*
I have just completed a Juris Doctorate degree. I was able to gain this degree while working full-time with the agency. It was the biggest challenge of my life.



Marisela Rios, Service Representative, Salinas DO; 10 years with the agency.

- *What motivated you to take control of your career?*
I am very satisfied in my personal life and decided that it's time to take charge of my career as well.
- *What do you expect to get from the Mentorship Program?*
Having a mentor will assist me in acknowledging what I need to work on to move ahead. Working on my SF HAAC IDP has prompted me to volunteer more in the office and to take more of a leadership role in my community.
- *Any additional things you are currently working on to help your self-development?*
Some of the things I enjoy doing is planning functions and events.



Juan Chavez-Corona, Service Representative, San Bernardino DO; 3 years with the agency.

- *What motivated you to take control of your career?*
My children and wife are my motivation to succeed and take control of my career.
- *What do you expect to get from the Mentorship Program?*
I expect to obtain the knowledge and guidance necessary to have a successful career and a successful life.
- *Any additional things you are currently working on to help your self-development?*
I am a father of four! I am a busy man when I am off work, but I am currently reading, "177 Mental Toughness Secrets of the World Class" by Steve Siebold. I have been helping the community in many ways and, currently, I teach an English as a Second Language class which has about 15 to 20 students.



2013 Mentorship Program (Cont.)

Jesse Rodriguez, Service Representative, Huntington Park DO; 3 years with the agency.



- *What motivated you to take control of your career?*
What motivated me to take control of my career was being ready in my current position to move on to the next one.
- *What do you expect to get from the Mentorship Program?*
From the SF HAAC Mentorship Program, I expect to apply the program's systematic approach towards achieving my career goals. I also expect to learn from the qualities that made my mentor successful in her career.
- *Any additional things you are currently working on to help your self-development?*
I have checked out a few books on leadership and public speaking from LMS to help me enhance my skills.

Fernando deGroot-Parajon, Benefit Authorizer, Western Regional Payment Center (PC5); 4 years with the agency.



- *What motivated you to take control of your career?*
I felt motivated to take control of my career after I learned about the many great opportunities available in the agency and I knew that, with the right amount of motivation, anything was possible.
- *What do you expect to get from the Mentorship Program?*
I felt honored to have been selected for the SF HAAC Mentorship Program as I knew this would provide me with the opportunity to reach out to successful leaders, and provide me with the opportunity to do more for the agency. My goal is also to explore new job opportunities, build a strong relationship with management, and help expand my knowledge of what the Agency has to offer. As a Benefit Authorizer, I provide guidance to coworkers in my module. I was also assigned the role of Systems LAN Coordinator for my component. As a Systems LAN Coordinator, I provide technical guidance on a large range of computer-related issues for my fellow coworkers.
- *Any additional things you are currently working on to help your self-development?*
I plan to get involved in various cultural and community events later this year, such as the Combined Federal Campaign, and Union Fundraisers.

**Program participants not highlighted in this issue:*

- **Helia Matha**, Teleservice Representative , Bay TSC
- **Estrella Vindas**, Teleservice Representative , Bay TSC

Saludos! From Cal Central - Latino Students Begin Journey to Success

I recently had the pleasure of volunteering at the Latino Student Success Conference hosted by Clovis West High School. It provided students with a unique opportunity to meet professionals who serve as mentors in their community and ask questions about their journey to becoming a successful individual.

Students started their day off with a welcome message from their principal and an introduction to the day's activities. Then they were divided into three groups and rotated between various workshops throughout the morning. The first workshop was called "Meet the Mentors." It was an interactive workshop where students visited different mentor booths and got to ask questions about spe-

cific jobs. Among the mentors were law enforcement personnel, teachers, counselors, medical professionals, business owners, and former Clovis West students. This is where I was able to share my experience and provide information about the Agency. Andrea Ramos and Javier Preciado joined me in having open communication with students as they asked questions about our jobs.

The second workshop was called, "Student Voice," and consisted of students voicing their opinions and concerns regarding what they need to be successful. The third workshop was aptly titled, "Panel of Professionals." In this group, students got to listen



Jennifer Shaw, Andrea Ramos, & Javier Preciado



The college career fair after lunch.



Students listening to their principal speak at the conference.

to several individuals as they shared their life stories and the obstacles they had to overcome to emerge as a successful person.

Once the first three workshops were done, students headed to lunch where they listened to Dr. Albert Valencia, a professor and chairperson in the Department of Counselor Education and Rehabilitation at the Kremen School of Education and Human Development. After lunch, students attended a college and career fair. Students were able to get information from many local colleges, as well as several military recruiters.

At the end of the day, students walked away with an invaluable wealth of information and a step in the right direction towards making positive, life-changing decisions. I walked away knowing that I was able to be a part of something that will ultimately change the lives of many young people for the better and that feeling was amazing!

MLK Day Graffiti Removal Project

On Saturday, January 19, 2013 (National Day of Service), Inland Area members from SF HAAC and SFRMA teamed up for a collaborative effort to wipe out graffiti in the city of Riverside, CA. During the event, which was organized in honor of MLK Day, volunteers painted over graffiti, picked up trash, and cleaned several streets in a neighborhood near Van Buren Blvd and Lincoln Ave. As a bonus, volunteers were able to meet and talk with the new Inland Area Director, Ron Jackson. The following articles are two first-hand accounts of the event from volunteers Maricela Dumond and Sabina Fernandes.



Maricela Dumond
CR
Redlands

Have you ever wondered, “Am I making a difference in the world?” I want you all to know that yes, you do make a difference and everything we do counts. No matter how big or small the deed, we all make an impact. In January 2013, I had the opportunity to participate in a SF HAAC-sponsored Graffiti Removal and Cleanup Project in the city of Riverside, CA. Our group, comprised of volunteers from various offices in the Inland Area, was able to work collaboratively with personnel from March A.R.B. and the City of Riverside. Together, we were able to pay it forward, and give a little something back to our community. Along the way, we were educated on how the Graffiti affected the local businesses and the youth in the community. Frank Corral, from the City of Riverside Public Works Department, was our con-

tact for this project. With Frank’s help and guidance, we painted walls, swept the gutters and gathered trash along the surface streets. This rewarding event provided a great opportunity for many of us to meet new people, both in and outside of SF HAAC, and to make a positive impact on our surrounding community. We worked hard and had a great time!

As you can imagine, many cities are in need of community outreach or help of some kind. We can all do our part in helping our own communities by becoming a coach, a community spokesperson, tutoring kids after classes or



even something simple, like recycling, etc. In SF HAAC, we have a wonderful opportunity to be able to contribute to our local community on a professional level by the outstanding services that we provide to members of the public on a daily basis. In addition, we also have the annual Combined Federal Campaign where we are able to donate money to local and non-local causes. SF HAAC provides us with a more personal ability to touch those around us. We have the opportunity to work directly with the youth in the community during Hispanic Youth Symposiums, city clean-up projects and outreach programs such as the Fiesta Broadway, just to name a few. I would encourage all of you to get excited, see what services or activities you can volunteer for through SF HAAC or in you local community. Always remember, there is no act too great or too small. Together we can – *Si Se Puede!*

MLK Day Graffiti Removal Project (Cont.)



Ariel Gonzalez
SR Corona DO

The difference between graffiti and art is permission. Cleaning graffiti is hard work; it is expensive and often damages surfaces to the point of permanently changing the character of the surface and the character of the neighborhood.

Graffiti is a blight on the community and the community landscape. It makes people fearful of their own neighborhoods and impacts negatively the value of community space and property. On January 19th (MLK Weekend), I had the pleasure and satisfaction of giving back to my community along side of my 10 year-old daughter, Carolina Gonzalez, and several of my coworkers from my work family. Some of us repainted walls and others picked up trash and cleaned the landscape. I encourage everyone to volunteer and make this world a better place. I am very proud of my daughter for being so conscientious of the ecology. She always picks up any trash that she sees and recycles everything that she can. She inspires me to do the same and I am grateful for that. Litter is something that can be started by anyone but can only be ended by everyone. Do you know how long it takes for waste material to decompose? Paper: 2.5 months;



Orange peel: 6 months; Milk carton: 5 years; Cigarette butt: 10-12 years; Plastic bag: 10-20 years; Disposable diaper: 75 years; Tin can: 100 years; Beer can: 200-500 years; Styrofoam: never (Source: *The New York Times Nemve E. Metropolitan Diary, October 1, 2001*). I leave you with a famous quote by Don Benito Juárez: “Entre los individuos, como entre las naciones, el respeto al derecho ajeno es la paz;” meaning, “Among individuals, as among nations, respect for the rights of others is peace.”



MLK Day Graffiti Removal Project (Cont.)



Sabina Fernandes
SR Ontario DO

“GRAFFITI” is any artwork or drawing, on walls and public spaces, defacing property.

Jason Welsh, Inland AVP of SF HAAC and SFRMA, in collaboration with the Riverside Public Works Department and the Welsh Foundation, organized a “Graffiti Removal Day” on January 19, 2013. Fellow co-workers, their children and friends jumped up to volunteer for the project. Ron Jackson, Inland Area Director, also joined us in the morning to show his support.

The day was warm and sunny. We completed introductions, signed release forms, and discussed general safety precautions. To quench our thirsts and hunger, we had snacks, juice and water available.

We used the most common method of graffiti removal – paint out. This method is low-cost and safe compared to chemical removal. The paint is the same color as the block wall and blends in with the rest of the wall.

We were placed in groups with paint buckets and brushes, and instructed to paint out the block walls and fences. Another group cleared the debris and litter strewn around in the area.

While working together tirelessly, we bonded and made new friends. My two kids loved the fact that, being taller than I, they could paint out graffiti in places out of reach. We all worked side-by-side to make the city beautiful.

The litter-clearing group cleared as much as they could with litter picking tools and black bags to collect the litter. The De-

partment of Public Works collected the bags at the end of the day.

Some volunteers switched groups midway to enjoy a great experience networking with other colleagues. Overall, it was a fun-filled day.



It's All About the Benjamins!



Leila Nieves
CR
Ontario DO

While there are some individuals that learn about money management from family, attending a financial literacy workshop may be another option to inform oneself. On February 2, 2013, SF HAAC Council hosted a financial literacy workshop in Phoenix, AZ. In attendance were SF HAAC President, Eric Bencomo, Vice President, Albert Meraz, Southwest AVP, Clare German, and Inland AVP, Jason Welsh. The

main presenter was Robert Hinkle, financial advisor, of Cambridge Financial Partners, LLC., a financial planning organization that presented an array of investment planning strategies. The financial literacy topics of the workshop included federal pensions, Thrift Savings Plan, ROTH Thrift Savings Plan, FEGLI, federal health benefits, and debt management. Robert Hinkle provided insight on how early planning can help maximize your investments and build financial security. By the end of the presentation, it became evident

that, without planning for one's future endeavors, it would not be easy to capitalize on their investments. Attending this workshop was a great way to heighten one's knowledge and financial literacy.



Live for Today, Plan for Tomorrow



Elisa Alcalá
CR
Phoenix FO

SF HAAC hosted a workshop on financial literacy with Robert Hinkel at Arizona State University. When I first heard of it I thought, why not? It's only a few hours and I may learn something. If anything I'll get to meet new people.

Mr. Hinkle started off with a quote, "Live for today; plan for tomorrow." I didn't understand it at the beginning of the workshop but, by the end, it made sense. He provided many useful tools and insights about planning for your future. He stated there is no right or wrong plan; it's about what fits your situation. The actions you take in planning now, differ if you are twenty years from retirement vs. one year away.

Mr. Hinkle provided easy-to-understand scenarios on choices we need to make now on retirement issues such as life insurance, health insurance, TSP, Roth IRAs, and good vs. bad debt. It became clearer that the choices we make do affect how our retirement plans will play out in the future. One major point that stood out is, "Do you know what your taxable income will be?" I certainly didn't. Just this one point created a change in the way I'm planning for my retirement.



**Albert Meraz, Augustin Arvizo, Eric Bencomo, Jason Welsh
Patty Zuniga, Clare Germán**

I thoroughly enjoyed participating in this workshop and I recommend attending if it's available near you. You will definitely leave with a wealth of information to help you plan for a better retirement. Also, take advantage of the free financial planning session with Mr. Hinkle's group, Cambridge Financial Partners; it's free for SF HAAC members.



My Pledge to Serve



Clare Germán
Southwest AVP

Last year I was invited to participate in a six-month course on leadership. When I was asked to “serve,” I thought, how hard can it be? A couple of evenings and weekends working in the community; no problem.

I must say, I was surprised when I received the list of requirements. Each “Hispanic Leader” was required to commit a substantial amount of time to the courses and money to a local charity of your choice. In addition to the course requirements, I agreed to go on a weekend leadership retreat and to volunteer for a seat on a Community Board of Directors. As I embarked on this quest to make a difference in my community and become a better leader, I began to see how being a “leader” is something many people desire to be, but cannot easily attain. I found out that in order to be a great Leader, one must be dedicated, innovative, ready to take a chance, willing to give endlessly without expecting to receive anything in return, and have a heart for the less fortunate. Your innate reaction to setbacks must be to rebound. You must have the understanding that being a great leader also means being a follower and, when times get tough, you can never forget the big picture. I am sure most of you are thinking you don’t need to take a course to know and understand these things, everyone should know this. However, it is the network of individuals and their shared experiences that help you gain the broader perspective, the knowledge, the skills and the abilities it takes to become a successful leader.

Our final requirement during this Leadership Program was to write “our pledge to serve.” This statement would be read at a dinner in the presence of 300 community leaders and advocates. In attendance were the City of Phoenix Mayor Greg Stanton, several city council members, and family members. In writing this “pledge,” I shared it with our current SF HAAC Vice President, Albert Meraz, who asked me to share it with you.

My Pledge to Serve

I pledge to serve my community to the best of my ability and to put the needs of others before my own. I have found that, when I do this, I am the most fulfilled. It is when I am selfless that I find myself. I vow to advocate for disabled children and adults, the less fortunate, victims of social injustice and the community at large. I pledge to be aware of social issues and support causes that benefit the community. I pledge never to turn my back on my people or my heritage. Although my goal is to serve in a larger capacity by sitting on boards and continuing with my international endeavors of advocating for the aged and disabled, I pledge to make a difference, no matter how small. If I can change the quality of life of one person, then I have accomplished my goal. I am a public servant at heart and by profession. Therefore, I vow to continue to develop my leadership skills and myself and, by doing so, make the East Valley Hispanic Leadership Institute, Valle Del Sol, my colleagues and my family proud.

As you become leaders, I ask that each of you take a moment to write your own “pledge to service.” Find the things that make you want to make a difference and I promise you will not regret it.

¿Que Hay De Nuevo?

Tri-Counties Area SF HAAC Mixer - Thursday, May 2, 2013

The Tri-Counties Area will be having a mixer on Thursday, May 2, 2013, beginning at 5:45 PM, at Chuy's Mesquite Broiler (311 Carmen Drive, Camarillo, CA 93010). Please bring your energy, ideas and a friend! Appetizers will be provided by SF HAAC. For more information and to RSVP, please contact Jose Velasco, Tri-Counties SF HAAC AVP, at (866) 964-2561. Click [here](#) to view the event flyer and feel free to share this information with others in the agency.

SoCal SF HAAC Networking Event - Friday, May 3, 2013

The Southern California SF HAAC Networking Event will include members from Inland, L.A. Metro, South Coast, and Tri-Counties. The event will be held on Friday, May 3, 2013, from 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM, at Luminarias Restaurant (3500 Ramona Blvd, Monterey Park, CA 91754). For additional details and to RSVP, please contact either Arcenio Carrillo (L.A. Metro AVP), Jason Welsh (Inland AVP), Carina Echeverria (South Coast AVP), or Jose Velasco (Tri-Counties AVP).



DO YOU HAVE A GREAT IDEA FOR A FUTURE NEWSLETTER OR WEBSITE ARTICLE? DO YOU WANT TO PROMOTE A COMMUNITY EVENT OR VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY? CONTACT YOUR LOCAL AREA VICE PRESIDENT (AVP) AND SUBMIT YOUR SUGGESTION.

"SACAR EL JUGO" (SLANG) MEANS TO TAKE FULL ADVANTAGE OF AN OPPORTUNITY. SO DON'T MISS OUT ON THIS OPPORTUNITY TO PROMOTE YOUR GREAT IDEA OR EVENT. WE'D LOVE TO HEAR FROM YOU!



Member Benefits:

Business Cards

¡Si Se Puede! eNewsletter

Educational Scholarships for Self & Eligible Family Members

Participation in our Mentorship Program

Self-Development and Training Workshops

Networking with other Professionals in our Agency

New Members

Area 1-South Coast

Ana Mendoza

Area 6-Inland

Fabiola Orozco

Sandy DeSantiago

Daniel Ortiz

Emma Samaniego

Agustin Celis

Robert Loewenstein

Richard Linebaugh

Sally Valencia

Area 6-Inland (Cont.)

Juan Chavez-Corona

Christian Andrew Marquez

Frances Vargas

Area 7-LA Metro

Nancy Meza

Mario M. Gutierrez

Andrew McKenzie

Area 8-Southwest

Alexandra Delfeld