



DIGEST

APRIL 16, 1990

COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES

Reading Program Sets Pace for Federal, State Governments

A year-old County reading program is fast becoming a nationwide model in the battle against drug use, crime and homelessness.

Since its March 1989 introduction, the Language Improvement Program at the Acton/Warm Springs County Rehabilitation Centers has been featured in numerous newspaper articles and ranked first for funding by the state's Adult Education Program Services. In addition, the Public Employees Roundtable Los Angeles Chapter recently nominated the Antelope Valley-based program for a 1990 Public Service Excellence Award.

At the substance abuse centers, residents learn to read with the help of literate residents in what Program Director Richard Rioux calls "cooperative learning."

"The bonding that takes place between the tutor and the student is incredible," Rioux said. "They're both there because of chemical abuse, and no one acts superior to the other."

With a 500-person combined bed capacity, the centers serve about 2,000 people annually, with one-third of all residents now participating in the program.

"Illiteracy is a core problem related to drug and alcohol abuse and homelessness, and 50

percent of the state's prison inmates are illiterate," Rioux said during a telephone interview. "If you can't fill out a job application, you can't do a job resume, and you can't identify what jobs are available at the employment office."

And now federal officials are getting the word.

'The bonding that takes place between the tutor and the student is incredible.'

Richard Rioux

Last month, Rioux received a "stunning" call from Washington, he said, adding that Bob Sweet, the Bush administration nominee for head of the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Administration, was on the line.

"Somebody called him and told him about us," Rioux said. "If he's appointed in March, one of his first stops will be our centers."

(Continued on page 4)



Captain Tim Stromer and Supervisor Pete Schabarum.

Stromer: Top Gun in Emergency Preparedness

When it comes to emergency preparedness, Fire Captain Tim Stromer ranks as top gun.

Stromer developed the County's Building Emergency Coordinators Program, which sprang to life during the last earthquake on February 28. And he's trained more than 1,400 County employees to help assure our safety during times of potential catastrophe.

Employee of the Month

"The County will never again be as unprepared to meet the survivability needs of its employees as we were in October 1987," Stromer said during a Board of Supervisors meeting honoring him as March 1990 County Employee of the Month. "Because of the Building Emergency Coordinators Program, we've made great strides in disaster preparedness in regards to building and employee safety."

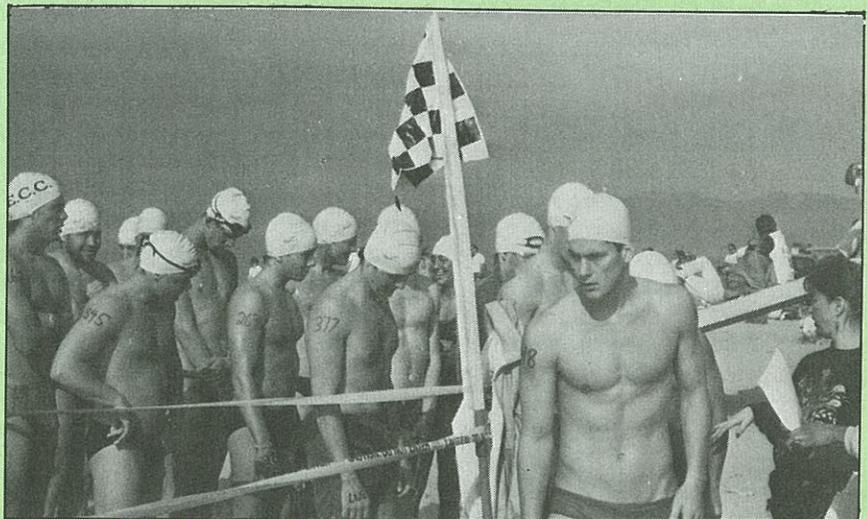
And the word keeps spreading about Stromer's expertise.

Archbishop Roger Mahony's cabinet recently asked him to train building emergency coordinators for the entire Catholic Archdiocese of Los Angeles.

His emergency-preparedness activities, however, show only part of the picture.

(Continued on page 2)

COUNTY HOPEFUL



Scott VanAppledorn, from Ann Arbor, Mich., leaves the check-in gate to prepare for the annual 1,000-meter County lifeguard recruitment qualifying swim in Santa Monica. Story and additional photos on page three.



New Employee Assistance Program Director Gloria Porter.

Gloria Porter Named EAP Director

Gloria Porter, a 16-year veteran in counseling and mental health services, is the new Employee Assistance Program director.

A licensed clinical social worker, Porter formerly served as the Employee Assistance Program manager for Woodland Hills-based Data-products before joining the County. At Data-products, a manufacturer and seller of printers with 4,000 employees worldwide, Porter's responsibilities included developing and maintaining the program.

Before that, she served as director and assistant director for counseling services at the University of Southern California.

Porter earned a bachelor's degree in social work from Adelphi University in New York and received a master's degree in social work from the University of Illinois.

Supervising a 10-person staff, Porter hopes to "develop new programs to enhance the delivery of service to County employees," she said.

The Employee Assistance Program provides assessment/referral and short term counseling services to all permanent County employees and their family members. Call (213) 744-4431.

Stromer: Employee of the Month

(Continued from page 1)

The eight-year County employee supervises and conducts aerial ladder training for fire fighters. He also specializes in a wide range of subjects, including teaching stress management to nurses, police and firemen.

A certified Red Cross instructor, Stromer is a member of the department's Wellness Committee and served as a "Critical Incident Counselor" during the Cerritos air disaster. In addition, he served as director of the California Rescue and Paramedic Association and helped pass current state legislation on paramedic services.

A graduate of California State University, Chico, Stromer lives in La Verne with his wife, Priscilla, and daughters Lindy and Sara.

Assessor Activates Earthquake Task Force Property Owners With \$5,000 Damage Should Report

Assessor John J. Lynch has activated a special disaster task force to help victims of the recent earthquakes and aftershocks qualify for property tax relief.

"The same special group which dealt with tax reduction assistance for those suffering losses in the 1987 Whittier earthquake will handle forms to help property owners distressed by the recent 5.5 magnitude earthquake," Lynch said.

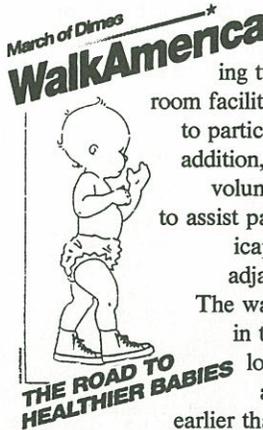
Owners of taxable property sustaining at least \$5,000 in damage should report such destruction immediately by writing directly to Lynch and requesting a reassessment form.

Lynch urged property owners to write directly to his Hall of Administration office, Room 250, 500 W. Temple St., Los Angeles, CA 90012-2770. Information may also be obtained by calling (213) 974-3332 or 974-8658.

Handicapped Workers Urged to Participate in Walkathon

All County handicapped workers are encouraged to make their mark for the March of Dimes by participating in the April 28 Walk-America at Bonelli Regional Park.

"I'd like to see all the disabled County workers come out," said Larry Bryant, County Handicap WalkAmerica chairman. "This event captures the spirit and enhances the public's attitude toward charitable giving."



A special 1.8-mile paved course, featuring two handicapped restroom facilities, enables everyone to participate, Bryant said. In addition, U.S. Naval Reserve volunteers will be on hand to assist participants, and handicap parking is available adjacent to the start line. The walk starts and finishes in the same place as the longer route but begins at 8 a.m., 30 minutes earlier than the nine mile trek.

Steve Sterry, chairman of the handicapped person's walk at Bonelli Park, founded the 1.8 mile event last year after realizing that obstacles on the course prevented the handicapped from participating.

"Disabled people couldn't walk in their own walk," Sterry said. "There was a log crossing the path and tremendous hills."

This year, Sterry said, no such obstacles exist.

"We must remember that it's also a social event," he said. "And it's going to be a blast."

For more information call Larry Bryant, (213) 974-1087.

Congratulations Retirees

We salute and appreciate the following retirees and hope they will enjoy their well-deserved leisure time after more than 25 years of County service:

Assessor: Ernie Abbe

Children's Services: Suzanne C. Bradish, Grace P. Bradley, Clara Dodge, Dorothy H. Thymes, Mary M. Wright

Fire: Kenneth D. Downs, Theodore Pearson, Don L. Roosa

Health Services: Doris Brown, Eunice Coleman, Dimple C. Cook, Betty J. Davis, Mary H. Hamilton, Sarah Holly, Robert F. Maronde, Laura M. McCoy, Antoinette M. Rocher, Lavanna L. Ross, Shirley G. Smith, Judith K. Snedeker, Emma Taylor, Willie J. Thompson, Catherine T. Walsh, James R. West, Mattie S. West, Beatrice Williams, Barbara D. Young.

Internal Services: Richard H. Edlin, Wilmer Gerlach, Eula M. Green, Joe D. Mann, Philip M. Sheridan

LACERA: Ann F. Fisher

Mental Health: Norman Tiber

Municipal Court: Leanela Mc Mahon, Thelma B. Sgouros

Probation: James A. Willoughby

Public Library: Harry E. Alston, Grant E. Crippen

Public Social Services: Barbara J. Harden, June M. Wirth

Public Works: Eleuterio Calcagni, Fujito Yoshiosato

Regional Planning: Arthur L. McKnight

Sheriff: Leroy E. Belyea, Rhea C. Brown, John F. Chambers, Menno Dammer, Joaquin C. Reiff, Carl W. Spreen, David S. Watner

Treasurer & Tax Collector: Vivian J. Calhoun, Benjamin M. Strain

SURF'S UP for Lifeguard Candidates

A. "I've always been an active swimmer and I can't stay away from the water. This will be the perfect summer job."

Ingrid Walters, a UCLA swim team member from Los Angeles



Beaches and Harbors Director Ted Reed, left, with Chief Lifeguard Don Rohrer.



Options Offered to Help Cut Smog, Congested Traffic

A far-reaching ordinance implementing a trip reduction program for County employees has been adopted by the Board of Supervisors.

More than 120 work sites and nearly 70,000 employees are affected by the comprehensive program, aimed at cutting smog and traffic congestion. The plan includes promotion of staggered and flexible work hours, expansion of ride sharing and park-and-ride, and use of peripheral parking and shuttle service.

Virtually identical to South Coast Air Quality Management District Regulation XV, the ordinance establishes target average vehicle ridership levels in three sections of the basin. The civic center has a goal of 1.75 average vehicle ridership, while the majority of the greater Los Angeles area has a 1.5 goal.

"This ordinance assures the County of a greater degree of local government control over the processes we are developing to reduce traffic congestion and clean up the air," said Supervisor Michael Antonovich, who introduced the motion.

In the coming weeks, departmental ridesharing coordinators will receive employee transportation training to help them develop employee services likely to result in fewer solo drivers arriving to work between 6 and 10 a.m.

Coordinators will establish telephone hotlines and bulletin boards for information on mass transit, and help organize vans and carpools. Additional incentives will be offered at each of the affected work sites to encourage ridesharing and alternate shifts.

Meanwhile, County employees are asked to evaluate their own commute and work habits to determine what options would work best. Are your work hours regular enough for you to carpool with a friend or neighbor? Do you have a long commute and wish you could join a vanpool? Would you like to take an express bus to work, allowing you free time to read the newspaper, or snooze a little longer? Are you interested in a 9/80 shift, meaning a 9-hour workday and one day off every other week?

Together, these options add up to large reductions in air pollution.

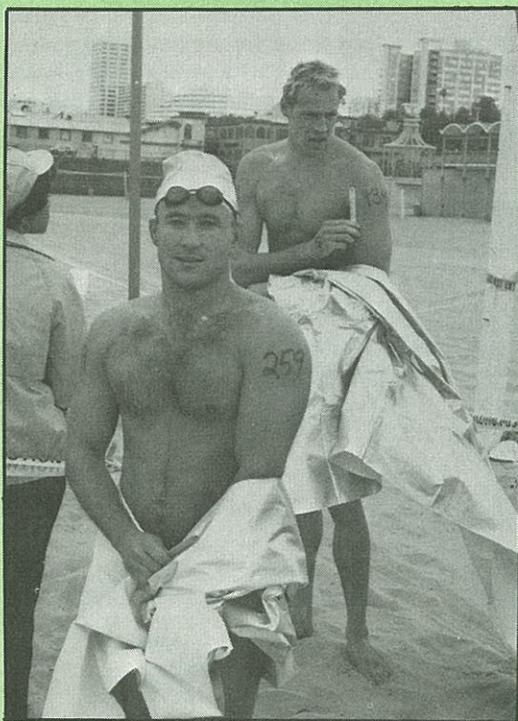
Q. Why Join the County Team?

A. "L.A. County is involved world-wide in lifesaving competitions. It will offer me an opportunity to compete internationally and learn new lifeguard techniques."

Randy Eickhoff, front, a San Diego lifeguard

A. "I was a lifeguard in Germany at a pool. But now I get a chance at helping save lives in the ocean; that's really exciting."

Bjorn Zikarsky, a USC swim team member from West Germany



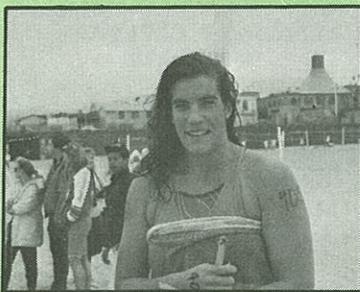
Surrounded by a gray sky and calm ocean, 187 candidates from throughout the U.S. and Europe entered the annual 1,000-meter County lifeguard recruitment qualifying swim in Santa Monica.

The top 100 finishers in the March 10 event qualified for oral interviews from which successful candidates will attend "rookie schools" in time for summer work.

The six days of training over a three-weekend period includes instruction and evaluation in lifeguarding, first aid and CPR, simulated ocean rescues, various run and swim tests and rescue board use.

Ted Reed, Department of Beaches and Harbors director, said he hopes for about 50 new summertime positions.

According to Beaches and Harbors' statistics, starting lifeguards earn \$12.43 per hour. The department currently employs 106 permanent and 588 part time, seasonal and reserve lifeguards.



A. "My dad's been a County lifeguard for 30 years. We've always been around the beach and I'm ready to carry on the family tradition."

Heather Suskin, a UCLA swim team member from Oxnard

New Child Abuse Hotline Number

A new Child Abuse Hotline telephone number is now in service, according to the Department of Children's Services.

Cases of suspected child abuse and neglect may be reported 24 hours a day, every day, including holidays, to 1-800-540-4000.

Reading Program a Success

(Continued from page 1)

"It's a highly individualized, unique program, with great emphasis on self-reliance," Robert Rowe, an adult education specialist with the State Department of Education, said. "It's an extremely valuable model that emphasizes peer instruction."

The seeds of the program were planted when Rioux discovered that 20 percent of the people at the centers functioned at or below the seventh-grade level. He realized the need for a major change.

A contract between the State Department of Education and the centers was signed in March 1988 and by January 1989 the program was off and running. And a recent \$50,000 state grant secured the program's immediate future.

The program also spawned a writer's workshop and a newsletter titled "Recovery."

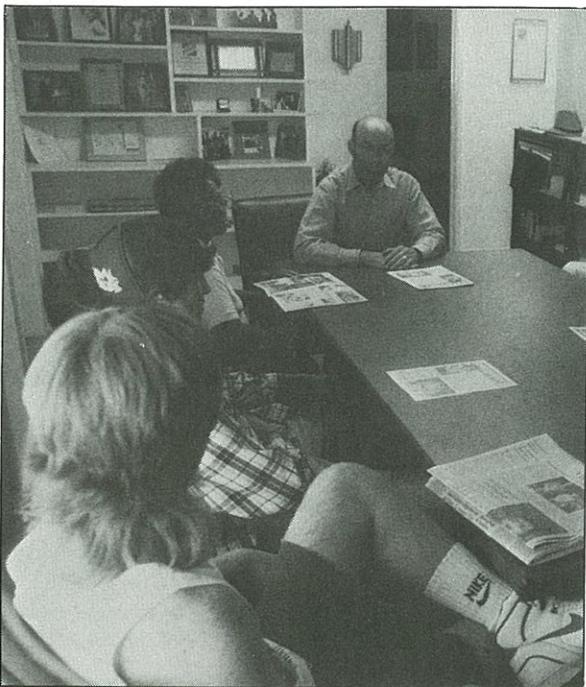
The newsletter, written by the resi-

dents, paints an intriguing portrait of the lives of substance abusers and homeless. In a recent edition, a resident described life on the streets.

"Sometimes you have to fight for a blanket or because someone wants what you're wearing. Sometimes you have to eat what other people throw away. You never know if or when you'll be killed, but sooner or later someone will want to hurt you. It's very rough being homeless."

The program is a new addition to a wide selection of services provided by two of the nation's largest alcohol and drug rehabilitation centers. Both centers have provided care for the indigent for more than 20 years.

"The realization that what we're doing is a model for the rest of the country is incredible," Rioux said. "We look forward to the continued fight to help stamp out illiteracy."



Language Improvement Program Director Richard Rioux conducts a "rap session" with students and tutors at the County Rehabilitation Center in Acton.

Teachers Needed for Schools, Juvenile Hall

More than 130 full time and dozens of substitute teachers are needed for the County juvenile court and community schools, according to the County Office of Education.

Mardi Reese, coordinator of teacher staffing for the education office, said County employees from Probation, Fire Warden and other departments have served during the past decade as substitute teachers.

And the schools now need replacements.

Due to the teacher shortage, the education office has obtained a state waiver for the Califor-

nia Basic Educational Skills Test for the 1989-90 school year. Normally, a teacher must pass the CBEST before teaching. Now, a teacher can be hired without the CBEST but must take the exam at the next available date.

About 175 substitutes are used on a daily basis, Reese said, adding that County employees often teach on their days off. Substitutes earn \$110 to \$120 per day, Reese said.

"Probation Department staff members make great substitute teachers," said Carole Barlin, a personnel coordinator for the education office.

"They have the training, knowledge and skills to work with the students; they understand the students and where they're coming from."

For more information, contact Mardi Reese at (213) 803-8382.

Contest Winners Hold Onto Dreams in Court

Wearing custom-designed judge's robes, fourth-graders Paula Armstead and Patricia Tyler watched their dreams come true.

Municipal Court Judge Veronica Simmons McBeth invited the two aspiring judges to share the bench on March 15, after they placed third in McDonald's "Hold Onto Your Dreams" Southern California speech contest.

"It was fun," Paula said, when asked about her day in court. "I always thought judges were old, and none of the judges I met today were."

Paula and Patricia, from 96th and 97th Street Elementary Schools, wrote about dreams of



(L. to R.) Paula Armstead, Municipal Court Judge Veronica Simmons McBeth, Patricia Tyler and Presiding Judge Jon Mayeda.

becoming attorneys, the role education will play in fulfilling those dreams and their role in changing the world.

Both girls participated in the morning court session, which included four short hearings and the start of jury selection on an assault case.

County of Los Angeles

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