

## Collaborating for Children

Santa's Workshop may have nothing on a non-descript building that has been transformed into the Orange County Toy Collaborative, which distributes over 250,000 toys each year to local children and families in need.

While Operation Santa Claus is a highly visible program of the County's Social Services Agency, the Orange County Toy Collaborative works behind the scenes to make sure that Operation Santa Claus and over 340 non-profit agencies have toys to grant the wishes of children this holiday season. One constant at the Toy Collaborative for the last nine years has been Dee Azevedo, who orchestrates the sometimes-frenzied activity that begins before Thanksgiving and ends after New Year's Day.

Dee first became involved with local toy programs even before she started working for the County of Orange, serving as an Operation Santa Claus volunteer in the late '90s. She began working for the County in 2001 and the Toy Collaborative became part of her duties as a Staff Specialist in 2005. "Every year about this time I say I'm not coming back next year," Dee admits, but she comes back each year because of the importance of the assignment. "It's tiring and frustrating but it is rewarding to help a needy child."

The Toy Collaborative provides a central depository for all toy donation drives conducted by members including the U.S. Marine Corps Reserves' Toys for Tots and the Orange County Fire Chiefs' Association's Spark of Love toy drives. Ever wonder where all the toys collected



Dee Azevedo stands with some of the bicycles donated to the Orange County Toy Collaborative by employees of Kaiser Permanente.

at local fire stations go? Or what happens to the toys collected by ABC7 during its annual toy drive at the Honda Center? The answer to both questions is the Orange County Toy Collaborative. And while these drives collect thousands of toys, Dee says there's always a need for more, a need that seems to be even greater this year. "Donations are down and requests have really gone up," stated Dee.

Non-profit organizations submit applications to receive toys from the Toy Collaborative and each child receives one age appropriate toy. The smallest order received from a non-profit organization is for 68 toys, while the largest toy order is for more than 6,000. A small army of volunteers work 30 people to a shift, two shifts per day sorting the toys received and filling each day's orders to prepare them for pick-up. Last year, 360 volunteers donated more than

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1,400 hours of their time through the Toy Collaborative.

When asked what she gets from her participation in the program, Dee simply says, “I’m doing my part in helping a child have a better Christmas.” Those involved in the program marvel at her dedication, noting that she has been known to work seven days a week from Thanksgiving through Christmas to make sure that toy donations are received, processed and delivered. Dee even says she tries to get all of her holiday shopping done before Thanksgiving because she’s too tired to shop when she goes home once the Toy Collaborative warehouse is in full swing.



Reservists from the 5th Battalion, 14th Marines, based in Seal Beach, deliver toys for needy children to Dee Azevedo at the Orange County Toy Collaborative.

So next year, when you begin to see holiday decorations on store shelves, also start thinking about participating in one of the toy drives that support the Orange County Toy Collaborative. The toy that you donate will certainly put a smile on a child’s face and will help to make sure that the Orange County Toy Collaborative continues its essential role in brightening the holidays for thousands of Orange County families. ■

## Birds of Prey Help Keep Gulls Away at OC Landfills



Brad Felger, pictured here, is the founder of Airstrike Bird Control and a Master Falconer with over 35 years of experience training birds of prey. His company is one of several utilized to control the gull populations at OC landfills.

A falconer arrives at an Orange County landfill each morning with his predator companions, ready to go to work. Some of the falcons and hawks will spend time in their shaded,

net-enclosed break area, while a few others are selected to work the first shift. With the birds in the back of the truck, the falconer approaches the active waste disposal area. Suddenly, seagulls rise from their perch on the waste – they are smart animals and recognize the vehicle as it approaches.

Once in place in the active waste area, the falconer launches the first bird from his tethered grip. The predator zooms toward the gulls, which scatter quickly at the sight of the raptor. After a few passes, the gulls disappear and the bird returns to the falconer for a tasty tidbit of meat from his hand.

Keeping gulls at bay used to call for constant attention at Orange County’s three landfills. In recent years, the gulls affected more than daily operations. As more neighborhoods were constructed closer to the sites, residents were

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greeted by the gulls as they passed over homes en route to their feast at the landfills. Bird abatement efforts have run the gamut, from firing cracker shells to using bird whistles (that sound like the falcons and hawks). Although somewhat successful, such actions were also audible in neighboring communities.

Enter the falcons and hawks. After a trial period of several months at the Olinda Alpha and Prima Deshecha landfills, falconry showed itself to be the most effective method for keeping nuisance birds away. Now OC Waste & Recycling has contracts in place with professional falconers to control the gull population at all three landfills.

The falcons and hawks offer an effective and sustainable approach to the regulatory-driven bird abatement program, using nature’s natural pecking order. ■

## Redesigned Archery Range Opens at Mile Square Regional Park



**ARCHERY SLIDESHOW: CLICK HERE**  
 OC Parks Director Stacy Blackwood provides opening remarks at the reopening celebration. Please click here to view additional photographs from the special event.

OC Parks held a grand reopening celebration for the redesigned archery range at Mile Square Regional Park on Saturday, November 23. The event featured Orange County Supervisor Janet Nguyen, First District, and welcomed local archers for a special presentation.

The event kicked off with comments by Supervisor Nguyen and OC Parks Director Stacy Blackwood. Supervisor Nguyen took the opening arrow shot and then high-level archers, including 1984 Olympic Gold Medalist Hyang Soon Seo, performed trick shots. Children were

provided with a shooting demonstration thanks to assistance from OC Parks Rangers, and there was open shooting on the range after the presentation.

Mile Square Regional Park has been home to the only archery range at an Orange County park since the early 1970s. The former archery range included 12 targets in an open field with a small safety berm behind the targets. The 6.71-acre redesigned range features 24 in-line shooting stations beneath a continuous metal shade canopy with 24 targets, bow racks, tables for servicing bows, perimeter fencing, north orientation and a 20-foot safety berm.

The new range is the largest in Orange County and it will be available to host future archery competitions. It was designed in consideration of public input and archery dynamics. Much of the dirt used to construct the safety berm came from the nearby Haster Basin Project, in which OC Public Works is relocating a portion of a flood-control outlet to add space for an open field and improve upon the existing park with increased recreation opportunities.

To learn more about Mile Square Regional Park, please visit <http://ocparks.com/parks/mile>. ■

## CSAC Honors HCA Official

The Health Care Agency's Deputy Agency Director for Public Health Services, David Souleles, was presented a 2013 Circle of Service Award by the California State Association of Counties (CSAC) on November 21 during the group's annual meeting in San Jose.

Souleles was recognized for his role in the negotiations for and implementation of Assembly Bill 85 and Senate Bill 98, which were health realignment savings measures enacted by the State of California. The Circle of Service Award is presented by CSAC to people who, through their commitment, energy and leadership, have helped CSAC implement policies that allow counties to serve the people of California more effectively.

During his career with the Health Care Agency (HCA), Souleles served as Division Manager for Disease Control and Epidemiology and Chief of Public Health Operations before becoming Deputy Agency Director for Public Health Ser-



David Souleles of the Health Care Agency (center) receives the Circle of Service Award from Yolo County Supervisor and CSAC Immediate Past President Ike McGowan (left) and Matt Cate, CSAC Executive Director (right).

vices. Prior to joining HCA, he held the position of Chief Deputy Director for the California Department of Health Services. In addition, he has served several terms as President of the County Health Executives Association of California (CHEAC), a statewide organization of county and city Public Health Department Directors. ■

## Want To Be Happier In Retirement? Start With a Pension



Knowing you'll have enough money in retirement emerged as the overwhelming concern of Americans aged 45 and older in a national opinion poll released earlier this year.

A guaranteed income was four times as likely (60%) to be mentioned as important compared to the three other prerequisites for retirement peace of mind: Staying healthy and socially connected (both 14%), and knowing family members were financially secure (12%). The poll of 6,300 people aged 45 and older was conducted by Harris Interactive for the 2013 Merrill Lynch Retirement Study.

The study also explored anxieties regarding longer lifespans in the US and how to maintain an adequate income in later years. Nearly half of men and 61% of women said running out of money was their biggest concern, second to fear of a serious health problem.

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A similar 2012 poll by the same firm for insurance giant AIG reported a nearly identical result: 61% of respondents chose having “financial peace of mind” as a top financial priority.

In Great Britain, the inaugural “National Happiness Survey” conducted last year found that the most content people were those with a pension (and those too young to even be thinking about retirement). The highest “happiness readings” came from pensioners aged 65 to 69—7.8 on a 10-point scale—matched only by teens living at home. All pension-collecting groups scored at least 7.6, reflecting the psychological dividend from a reliable retirement income.

County of Orange employees enjoy some of the most generous retirement formulas in the country. Providing assured pension payments is the job of the Orange County Employees Retirement System (OCERS). “OCERS provides you with a guaranteed lifetime pension benefit that will not run out no matter how long you may live,” said OCERS Chief Executive Officer Steve Delaney.

To ensure that such an important promise doesn’t unduly burden future employees and taxpayers, OCERS diversifies its portfolio and follows careful policies to avoid risk, he said. As of October 31, 2013, OCERS’ portfolio was at an all-time high of \$10.9 billion, putting it in the top tier of nearly 4,000 public pension systems in the nation. ■

## County Celebrates 125th Birthday in 2014



Back in 1889, Orange County celebrated its 100th anniversary, or Centennial. Now, 25 years later, the County is preparing for another observance, this one of its 125th anniversary or Quasiquicentennial. As approved by the Board of Supervisors, OC125, as the observance will be known, will celebrate Orange County’s rich 125 year history and some of the people, places and events that make Orange County unique.

When California became a state in 1850, what is now Orange County was a part of Los

Angeles County. According to information from the OC Archives, several attempts in the 1870’s and ‘80s to form a new county failed, but in 1889, the area’s lone Assemblyman, Col. E.E. Edwards of Santa Ana, introduced a new bill to create Orange County. Santa Ana’s founder, William H. Spurgeon, a prominent Democrat, joined local Republican leader James McFadden in helping Col. Edwards lobby the State Legislature. They also enlisted the support of the San Francisco delegation, which was more than happy to see Los Angeles County lose some of its population and power. The bill passed in both houses of the State Legislature and was signed into law by Governor Robert Waterman on March 11, 1889. However, the bill as approved did not actually create Orange County; it only allowed for a vote of the local residents to decide the matter. When the vote was held on June 4, 1889, the measure passed easily: 2,509 to 500.

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Once the formation of Orange County was approved, a second election was held on July 17 to choose a county seat and elect county officers. Orange County was officially born on August 1, 1889 and the Board of Supervisors met for the first time on August 5. When Orange County was formed, there were just three incorporated cities here and a population of about 15,000.

More information about OC125, the County's history and the people, places and things that best represent Orange County will soon be appearing on the County's website, <http://ocgov.com/>. ■

## Become a Trained Disaster Service Worker!

County employees are among the most important County resources during a disaster. It's during times of duress when the County's ever-ready, trained Disaster Service Workers are needed most.

When an emergency arises – such as a flood, fire or earthquake – the impact on the community can be devastating. It takes a team of dedicated professionals functioning together to lessen the effects of the disaster and to help rebuild the area. All County employees are designated Disaster Service Workers and may be called upon to participate in exercises for preparedness or activation of the County's Emergency Operations Center (EOC).

A variety of training opportunities are available to acquaint employees with the EOC and the positions which support EOC operations. A description of the courses and the training schedule are now available on the Training Partner web site at <http://trainingpartner.ocgov.com>. In the Course Catalog section, the courses



es are listed under Countywide Training – Sheriff/Coroner. You will start with the “Introduction to SEMS/NIMS & EOC Orientation” course and others can be added subsequently.

The staff of the Orange County Sheriff's Department Emergency Management Division looks forward to seeing you at one of these important training opportunities. ■

## New Public Service Announcements Available On AlertOC

Recent history reminds us that disasters can happen anytime, anywhere. Where will you go to get important information during an emergency? The Orange County Sheriff's Department Emergency Management Division is pleased to announce new Public Service Announcements are now available on [www.AlertOC.com](http://www.AlertOC.com).

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The Public Service Announcements are designed to encourage County residents to register their contact information in order to receive important, time sensitive voice messages from the County or City in which they live or work. These important Public Service Announcements were made possible by a partnership between the County of Orange and Southern California Edison.



AlertOC is Orange County’s mass notification system. Messages may be sent to home, cell, or business phones. Visit the AlertOC website at [www.AlertOC.com](http://www.AlertOC.com) to view the Public Service Announcements, which can be found in the “Videos” section of the website. If you haven’t done so already, register your contact information with AlertOC to ensure you receive important emergency information. ■

## Assistant Public Defender Selected for Statewide Panel

Assistant Public Defender Tracy LeSage has been selected by California Governor Jerry Brown to serve on the State Bar of California Attorney Diversion and Assistance Program Oversight Committee.

The Oversight Committee oversees the operation of the Lawyer Assistance Program (LAP), which was implemented in January 2002 to protect the public, the courts and the legal profession by offering education and rehabilitative programs to State Bar members suffering from substance abuse and mental illness. “This is a prestigious reflection on Tracy’s quality and integrity,” Orange County Public Defender Frank Ospino said of her appointment. The committee’s 12 members include six appointed by the State Bar, four by the Governor’s Office and one each by the Senate Rules Committee and the Assembly Speaker.

LeSage has served in multiple positions at the Orange County Public Defender’s Office since 2000, including Assistant Public Defender and Deputy Public Defender. She is a member of



Assistant Public Defender Tracy LeSage

the Orange County Bar Association and the Orange County Thurgood Marshall Bar Association and is a mentor at Chapman University Fowler School of Law. LeSage earned her Juris Doctor degree from the Western State University College of Law. ■

Join OC Animal Care and the Anaheim Ducks for:

# Animal Shelter Night at Honda Center!

**Sunday, January 12th**  
**3:30 p.m. - 5 p.m. at the Hockey Spot!**

Join the Anaheim Ducks and OC Animal Care on Sunday, January 12th, for a fun-filled afternoon at Honda Center!

- Meet shelter animals
- Learn about OC Animal Care
- Donate new or gently used towels, blankets, pet toys or pet food

We hope to see you there!






For more information, please visit [anaheimducks.com](http://anaheimducks.com) or [ocpetinfo.com](http://ocpetinfo.com)

OC Community Resources

## Get the 411 on the Social Services Agency

- The Social Services Agency (SSA) is the largest County of Orange agency/department. Staff served an average of 1-in-every-6 Orange County residents – approximately 525,000 clients per month – in 2013.
- SSA collaborates with Orange County’s faith-based community through the Faith in Motion program. The agency is currently working with over 54 local churches, organizations, and individuals to support children and families in need. Last year, over 400 requests for assistance were met by program partners.
- Approximately 475,000 Orange County residents received Medi-Cal in September of 2013. An additional 60,000 recipients are expected to receive these benefits by December of 2014 due to the program’s expansion through California’s implementation of the Affordable Care Act.
- SSA’s Child Abuse Registry received 3,281 reports in June of 2013. Callers to the department’s hotline at (800) 207-4464 can confidentially discuss or report suspected abuse 24 hours a day, seven days per week.

To learn more about the Social Services Agency, please visit [www.ocgov.com/gov/ssa/](http://www.ocgov.com/gov/ssa/).



**Service Awards**

For the Month of December

**40 YEARS**

**Lucy Flores**  
Assessor

**35 YEARS**

**Jan Grimes**  
Auditor-Controller

**Susan Lorenz**  
Probation

**Steven Dixon**  
Social Services Agency

**30 YEARS**

**Juan Balcazar**  
OC Community Resources

**Elayne Dowling**  
Sheriff-Coroner

**Michael Genovese**  
Sheriff-Coroner

**Daniel Salcedo**  
Sheriff-Coroner

**Cecilia Arroyo**  
Social Services Agency

**Carmen Harper**  
Social Services Agency

**Ramona Rangel**  
Social Services Agency

**25 YEARS**

**Gloria Horton**  
County Executive Office

**Debra Jackson**  
District Attorney

**Timothy Grogan**  
Health Care Agency

**Pravin Kansagra**  
Health Care Agency

**Ruth Strickland**  
Health Care Agency

**Norman Wohkittel**  
John Wayne Airport

**Estella Giancola**  
OC Community Resources

**Christine Hutchinson**  
OC Community Resources

**Brandi Solarte**  
OC Community Resources

**Artemio Jaime**  
OC Public Works

**Barbara Adrian**  
Probation

**Gwendolyn Harris**  
Probation

**Miguel Aguilar**  
Sheriff-Coroner

**Denise Castro**  
Sheriff-Coroner

**Ronald Eccles**  
Sheriff-Coroner

**Michael Miller**  
Sheriff-Coroner

**Michael Reidling**  
Sheriff-Coroner

**George Senorans**  
Sheriff-Coroner

**Margene Barker**  
Social Services Agency

**Mary Barrett**  
Social Services Agency

**Mark Campbell**  
Social Services Agency

**Wes Cleveringa**  
Social Services Agency

**Gina Diep**  
Social Services Agency

**Elva Duval**  
Social Services Agency

**Hossein Foroughi**  
Social Services Agency

**Phuc Nguyen**  
Social Services Agency

**Rosa Nunez**  
Social Services Agency

**Laurie Paulsen Smith**  
Social Services Agency

**Sherene Perez**  
Social Services Agency

**Kim Pham**  
Social Services Agency

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**25 YEARS  
CONTINUED**

**Christine Salas**  
Social Services Agency

**Abigail Sanchez**  
Social Services Agency

**Kelly Whitehead**  
Social Services Agency

**Melissa Dobbins**  
Treasurer-Tax Collector

**Matthew Murphy**  
District Attorney

**Rebecca Olivieri**  
District Attorney

**Kathleen Roberts**  
District Attorney

**Daniel Wagner**  
District Attorney

**Bradley Hovda**  
Health Care Agency

**Esther Viramontes**  
Health Care Agency

**Michael Ortega**  
Probation

**John Barbour**  
Sheriff-Coroner

**David Beeler**  
Sheriff-Coroner

**William Gaul**  
Sheriff-Coroner

**Edward Lutz**  
Sheriff-Coroner

**Kenneth Querol**  
Sheriff-Coroner

**Arcadio Ramos**  
Sheriff-Coroner

**Joyce Scott-Moody**  
Sheriff-Coroner

**Shawn Tangard**  
Sheriff-Coroner

**Kevin Wade**  
Sheriff-Coroner

**Ricardo Zamora**  
Sheriff-Coroner

**Sirenia Infante**  
Social Services Agency

**Eileen Lazenby**  
Social Services Agency

**Jane Martorana**  
Social Services Agency

**Guadalupe Robles**  
Social Services Agency

**Lisa Tovar**  
Social Services Agency

**Jeffrey Weiss**  
Social Services Agency

**20 YEARS**

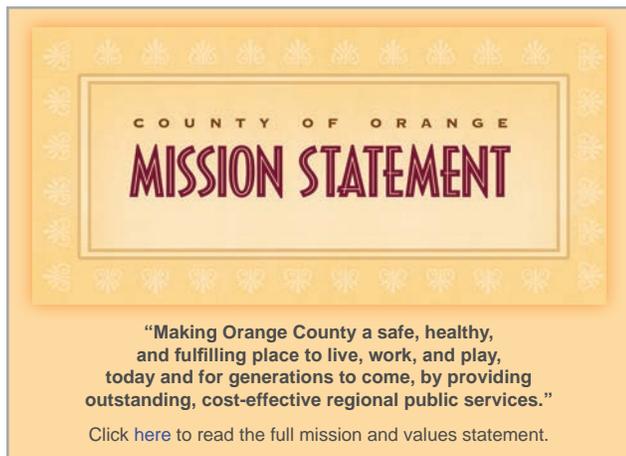
**Marion Marroquin**  
Child Support Services

**Annette Santillan**  
Child Support Services

**Guadalupe Sandoval**  
Child Support Services

**Eric Jasso**  
County Executive Office

**Elizabeth Molfetta**  
District Attorney



COUNTY OF ORANGE  
**MISSION STATEMENT**

“Making Orange County a safe, healthy, and fulfilling place to live, work, and play, today and for generations to come, by providing outstanding, cost-effective regional public services.”

Click [here](#) to read the full mission and values statement.



**CONTACT US**

COUNTY CONNECTION is distributed monthly by the County Executive Office and is published by CEO/Communications. Call 714.834.6203 or e-mail [ask.the.ceo@ocgov.com](mailto:ask.the.ceo@ocgov.com) with any suggestions and comments.

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