



Public Health
California Children's Services

CCS FAMILY NEWSLETTER



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Editor

Laura McLaughlin, MSW

Many Thanks To:

Dr. Andrew Wai, Kemi Alemoh, Nilda Yanez & Elizabeth Barraza.

And : A very Happy

Retirement to Alicia Newton, MSW from Santa Clara County CCS.

Please note:

If you would like an electronic copy of this publication please email Laura:

lmclaughlin@dph.sbcounty.gov

California Children's Services Medical Therapy Units

Manal Kassab, MA, OTR, Supervising Therapist

Carmack MTU, (909) 880-6611, Sherylle Martin, OTR, Unit Supervisor

Colton MTU, (909) 433-4752, Scott Medlin, PT, Unit Supervisor

Etiwanda MTU, (909) 463-3010, Steve Danlag, PT, Unit Supervisor

Fontana MTU, (909) 357-5900, Nivin Ghattas, OTR, Unit Supervisor

Montclair MTU, (909) 445-1665, Angie Atkins, OTR, Unit Supervisor

Redlands MTU, (909) 307-2441, Elaine Bauman, OTR, Unit Supervisor

Siegrist/Barstow MTU, (760) 244-7999, Marleah Moore, PT, Unit Supervisor

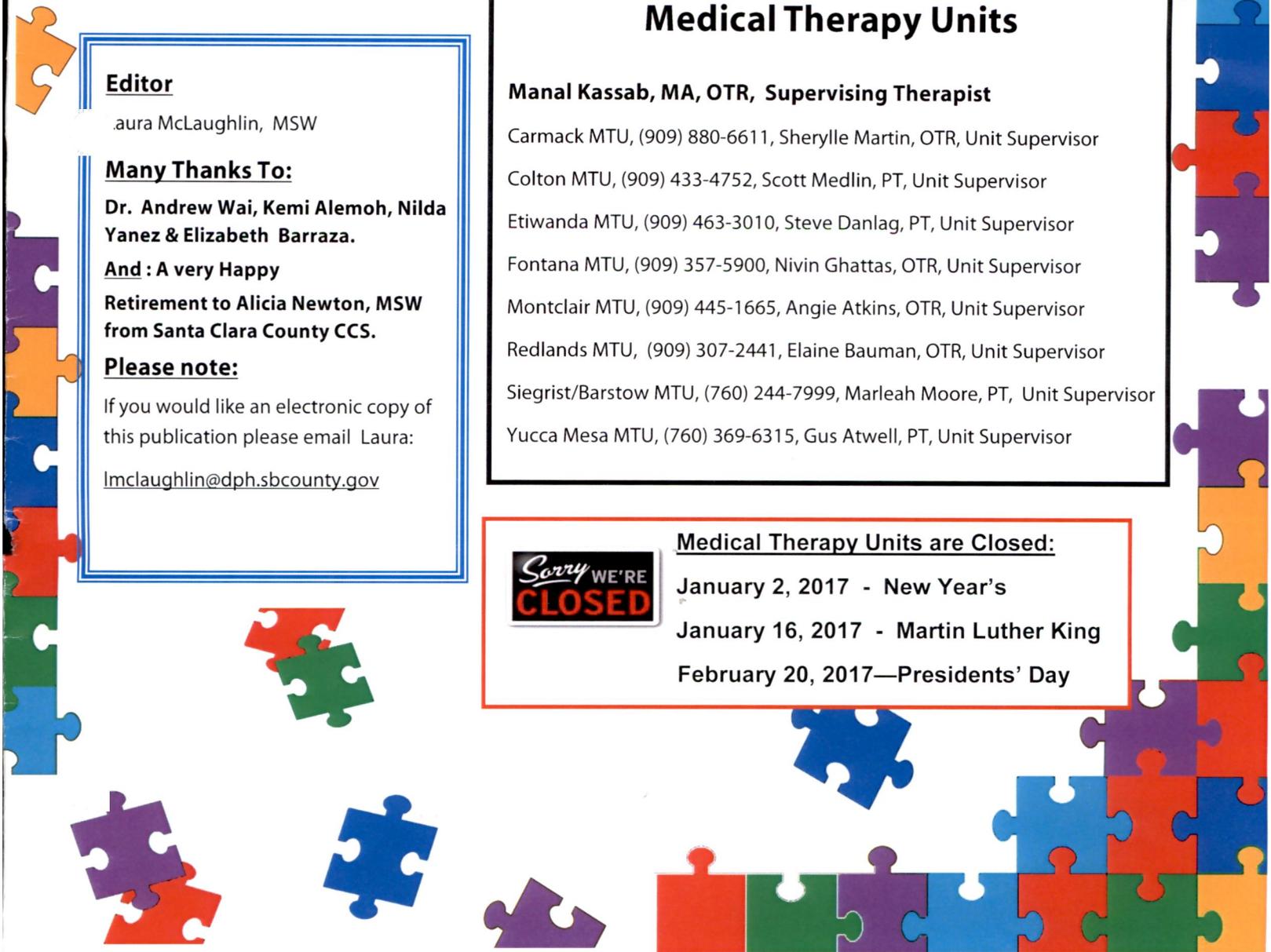
Yucca Mesa MTU, (760) 369-6315, Gus Atwell, PT, Unit Supervisor

Medical Therapy Units are Closed:

January 2, 2017 - New Year's

January 16, 2017 - Martin Luther King

February 20, 2017—Presidents' Day





LOMA LINDA RONALD MCDONALD HOUSE GRAND RE-OPENING CELEBRATION



Since opening in 1996 the Loma Linda Ronald McDonald House has served as a “home away from home” to over 20,000 families of critically ill children being treated at local hospitals. Many of those families are with California Children’s Services (CCS) San Bernardino County.

Ronald McDonald House was re-opened on December 11, 2016 and they have expanded from 13,000 square feet to 45,000 square feet! They will now house more than twice the families they accommodated before with an expanded kitchen, dining area, teen room, sanctuary, library and much more.

We are very grateful to have this amazing resource for our San Bernardino CCS children and families.

Congratulations to our wonderful friends at Loma Linda Ronald McDonald House! We look forward to many more happy years working with you. You truly are a “soft place to fall” and you are very much appreciated for all you do.

CCS attends IRC Fall Festival



Kemi Alemoh and Nilda Yanez with Cooper Yanez, CCS Mascot

Inland Regional Center held its Fall Festival (annual resource fair) for IRC Consumers and families, on November 19th at San Manuel Stadium. California Children's Services (CCS) Social Workers, Kemi Alemoh, Social Service Practitioner and Nilda Yanez, Social Worker II had the opportunity to participate. Many other community agencies and providers hosted sports-themed booths at the Stadium, home of the Inland Empire 66ers baseball team. Consumers, families, vendors and staff were encouraged to dress in their favorite team gear at the sports-themed event. It was incredible to see guests of all ages enjoying the annual event with an afternoon of entertaining family activities. CCS joined in the fun with a ring toss game. Not only did the families enjoy themselves with a live DJ, food, prizes, games and face painting, but they were able to receive important information about services and resources available in the community. Kemi and Nilda had an incredible time interacting and connecting with consumers and their families. We are thankful CCS Social Work was able to participate in this event and present resource information to our community.





Source: KidsHealth.org

As a parent, you want to give equal attention to all of your children. But when parenting a child with special needs, that can be hard. Your child with a disability needs you. But so do his or her siblings. It may feel like there's never enough of your attention to go around — and your other kids might begin to feel left out.

It can help to understand what your typically developing child or teen might be thinking and feeling. Kids love their siblings. They want to understand why there are some things that a sibling with a disability cannot do, and how they can help.

By answering questions in an age-appropriate way and being open and honest, you can help ease worries, clear up any confusion, and maybe even give your other kids a chance to help out. Kids who feel understood, loved, and secure about their place in the family can thrive — and the bond between siblings can grow.

Here's what might come up with kids at different ages and stages of development.

Preschoolers (Ages 3 to 5)

By nature, preschoolers feel that everything is about them and what they want — from the game they want to play to the toy they ask for at the store. So helping them understand why a sibling might need more of your time or attention can be hard.

It can help to set aside one-on-one time with your child. This can be a challenge, but even a few minutes spent playing ball or allowing your little one to "help" you in the kitchen at mealtime can provide the mommy or daddy time that your child needs.

When kids ask about their sibling's abilities, explain the condition using simple language in a way they can understand. Use real words, like "cerebral palsy" instead of "boo boo." This prevents confusion in kids who get their own cuts and scrapes — you don't want them to be overly concerned about a bump on the head.

Say something like, "Your brother has trouble walking because he has cerebral palsy." If your child asks, "What is cerebral palsy?," state in simple terms that it's a condition that makes it harder for a child to do the same things other kids do.

Kids this age are also "magical thinkers" — so, the drink poured at the tea party is very hot and the monsters under the bed are very real. When kids have a sibling with special needs, this type of thinking can mean that they worry that the disability is an illness, like the common cold. Reassure your child that he or she cannot "catch" a condition like cerebral palsy, and that nothing either child did created the condition — it is no one's "fault."

Big Kids (Ages 6 to 12)

By elementary school, kids start to better understand the "why" of a diagnosis. Expect that you will get more complicated questions, and don't be afraid to answer them. For example, for questions about a sibling with limited mobility, your explanation might expand to "His legs don't work because he was born with a health problem." The next question might be, "Will he ever walk?," to which you need to answer honestly: "I don't know if he will, but we're going to try to help him do that. That's why he has therapy." Your child might be sad or worried about his or her sibling's health. But playing together and enjoying each other's company can help. Encourage your typically developing child to read books to his or her sibling, build block towers together, and do craft activities with fingerpaint or clay.

This is also the age when kids start having to explain their sibling's condition to their friends. Some friends might ask rude questions or even participate in bullying behavior such as name-calling, which can leave your child feeling embarrassed, angry, or guilty. You can help your child weather these encounters by rehearsing some conversations. If someone asks, "What's wrong with your sister?," for example, your child can simply say: "She has cerebral palsy." Or if a classmate uses an unkind term to describe the sibling with special needs, let your other kids know that as hard as it is, they must not act out in anger. Instead, help them explain the situation: "It's harder for my sister to learn new things than it is for you or me, but that doesn't make it OK to say mean things about her."

Sibling rivalry also builds at this age, so don't be surprised if kids act jealous of their brother or sister with special needs. After all, they see their sibling getting extra attention, or being allowed to stay up later or excused from doing chores. Comparisons are normal, but explain that while it seems unfair, this is simply the way it has to be. Just as a child might feel that the sibling is getting extra attention, there are many opportunities that the sibling with special needs cannot have. Fair does not always mean equal.

Teens (Ages 13 and Up)

During the teen years, siblings often feel increased pressure to care for their siblings with special needs. You might rely on your teen to babysit or help more with chores around the house. Teens might feel pressure to take on more responsibility than they should at this age. As a parent, make sure you are not asking too much of your teen. Make certain responsibilities, such as babysitting, a choice. This will help teens feel that they have control over how much they help out. For example: "It would be great if you could watch your sister, but if you want to go out with your friends, that's OK." Also, be sure that you don't expect too much when it comes to chores, schoolwork, or extracurricular activities. Typically developing children sometimes feel extra pressure to be perfect so that their parents don't have to worry about them. Teens are struggling with their independence from parents. And a teen who has a sibling with special needs also may struggle with the idea of life apart from that sibling. Let your teen know that wanting more independence and experiencing more of the world is normal, healthy, and encouraged, within safe limits.

As teens near adulthood, they might start to worry about the future, and wonder who is going to help care for the sibling once they've moved out — or if something happens to you. Reassure your teen that whatever the future holds, help with caring for his or her sibling will depend on how much your teen is comfortable taking on. Then, have a plan ready for when changes come that will benefit all members of the family.

Handling Strong Emotions

Just as parenting a child with special needs can be joyful **and** frustrating, kids and teens who have a brother or sister with special needs will have ups and downs. Some siblings roll with the punches and don't let much bother them, while others are more sensitive and take things to heart. These kids need healthy ways to work through their emotions. Writing in a journal, being physically active, or participating in creative arts like dance or music are good ways to handle strong emotions. But if you notice changes in your child's sleep routine, appetite, mood, or behavior, it could be a sign of anxiety, depression, or another problem. If this happens, seek help from a mental health professional for your child.

Interview with Dr. Andrew Wai

By: Kemi Alemoh, MSW



Dr. Andrew Wai, is the newest addition to the CCS family. He recently joined California Children's Services as a Pediatrician and Internist. During a Pediatric clinic at Carmack Medical Therapy Unit (MTU) I was able to interview him. He stated that he was honored to be interviewed so that our CCS families can get to know him better.

This pediatrician shared with me that his ultimate path to becoming a doctor was challenging. He started out as a History major at the University of California at Los Angeles. He then realized that this was not something he enjoyed. Next, he changed to an Engineering major. When asked what made him want to become a doctor he said, "I was enjoying engineering however; I realized that I wanted to do something on a larger scale. I wanted to do something that was personable and something that I could be one on one with people. I wanted to have as much interaction as I could with other individuals. Soon I realized that being in the medical field would allow me to be able to build relationships with people". Dr. Wai's medical journey soon began from there. After completing his undergraduate work at UCLA, he went on to Medical School at Loma Linda University and graduated in 2011.

When Dr. Wai is not at the CCS pediatric clinic or not working at the pediatric unit in Loma Linda, you can find him doing some of his favorite activities. Dr. Wai has mentioned that he loves travel and Washington D.C. is a favorite destination. He says he can "get lost in the city with all the free museums and historical monuments". Another hobby of his is photography. He often finds himself taking pictures of nature. Dr. Wai also enjoys spending time with friends and family whenever he can. He likes watching movies and talking about the many traveling destinations that he has visited.

This doctor also spends his time volunteering in local organizations outside of his professional career. He is a part of the Christian Medical and Dental Association. There, he mentors upcoming students in the medical field. Additionally, Dr. Wai is involved in his local church in Riverside.

He told me a story that occurred during one of his many interesting traveling adventures. On a flight from Chicago to San Francisco, there was a man who tried to hijack the plane. Dr. Wai was able to get a photo of the individual. He told me that the situation was quickly controlled by the U.S. Marshalls that were onboard. Dr. Wai then told me that he was on the news because he was the only individual that had taken pictures of the suspect. He became an international news sensation as everyone wanted to talk to him about his experience on the plane.

Since working with our CCS families, Dr. Wai states that he has learned a lot from our CCS parents. He is amazed by how a lot of the parents are great advocates for their children. He understands that overcoming the barriers for their child's healthcare is only a small portion of barriers they must face. As a result, he is grateful for the CCS parents and how they take care of their children while dealing with other emotional barriers.

In the final portion of my interview with Dr. Wai, he indicated that he wanted the CCS parents to understand that he is highly appreciative of the sacrifices that they make for their children and also the resilience that they have demonstrated. Dr. Wai is looking forward to working with more CCS families and being a part of their child's medical journey and ultimate growth.