



# THE LOOP

A COLLECTION OF STORIES FROM AROUND NEVADA

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The month of March brings us some very important observances, none more so than **Employee Appreciation Day** (March 4) and **Women's History Month**. As I ponder these two observances and the theme associated with this year's **Women's History Month** of "Providing Healing, Promoting Hope," aimed at the tireless work of women on the frontline during the COVID-19 pandemic, I find myself filled with a great deal of gratitude. Gratitude toward the women (and men) employed by WestCare Nevada. I also am reminded of our mission that "...empowers everyone with whom we come into contact to engage in a process of healing, growth and change..." further solidifying our desire toward enhancing, deepening, and strengthening our connections with this community.

WestCare Nevada celebrated **Employee Appreciation Day** by sending all 101 employees an Amazon gift card. This month's issue of the Loop newsletter includes articles written about some of the women who have gone above and beyond over the last two years, giving of themselves, and willingly serving others during the pandemic. You will also see some of the fruit of our labor when it comes to our connection to the community, specifically in relation to the City of Las Vegas and their generosity toward

providing WestCare Nevada with a large sum of American Rescue Plan Act dollars, which will assist us in building The Village at the Women and Children's Campus.

I truly consider our frontline workers heroes and for that, I am grateful. There is no question that they have all made a difference and that I appreciate what they do for this agency and for others. I believe that this gratitude strengthens the bond that we have for one another. This gratitude increases our desire to continue to do things for others in return. This gratitude releases positive emotions and leaves no room for negative ones. Finally, this gratitude expands and creates a positive feedback loop, creating well-being, joy, and peace for ourselves and for those around us, hence once again, Uplifting the Human Spirit. We truly hope and pray that upon reading this issue of the Loop, it will do the same for you as well.



Leo Magrdichian, LCSW, LCADC, Vice President



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## The Village at The Women and Children's Campus Receives a Major Boost of Support

By Andrew Moran, Development Director

Our proposed women's transitional living project, **The Village at the Women and Children's Campus**, was a part of history last month when the **Las Vegas City Council** voted to gift \$120 million to worthy nonprofits and we were picked as one of the lucky recipients. It was a unanimous decision from the Las Vegas City Council, all in favor of granting The Village \$2.5 million out of funds allotted by the **American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARPA)**.

The ARPA or as it's known to many, the COVID-19 Stimulus Package, is a \$1.9 trillion economic stimulus bill passed by Congress on March 11, 2021. The State of Nevada received \$6.7 billion and they have distributed this among municipalities. The City of Las Vegas approved the relief for local businesses, affordable housing projects, and other pandemic-related response groups.

Our team worked very hard and we applied back in November and on February 16, in an open council meeting, we were approved - bringing us much closer to our overall goal of breaking ground by this summer.

City Manager, Jorge Cervantes, approved and authorized the award and allocation of funds, totaling \$121,070,000 allocated to the city.

We met numerous times with the city's representatives giving them tours of our facilities and explaining how important our 84-apartment Village will be for the community. We have gained their support and received letters to aid us in our efforts. Out of 500 requests for funding, totaling about \$2.2 billion, only 149 eligible applicants were selected.

Clark County also received \$440 million in ARPA funds and we are currently in the application process to receive the third round of funding.

We will continue our pursuit of breaking ground on The Village as soon as possible and will keep our WestCare Family up to date on further developments with this exciting project!



# THANK YOU *for all you do*

On this most recent Employee Appreciation Day, all staff received a \$25 Amazon gift card along with a bag with supplies to make some delicious s'mores! With this gift came the message, "Your continued effort towards *Uplifting the Human Spirit* does not go unnoticed. Thank you for all you do. Happy Employee Appreciation Day. Hope you enjoy this \$25 Amazon Gift Card!" In addition, our programs organized their own ways of showing their appreciation for their teams' efforts like Reno HomeFront, who took the time to share a breakfast together at Denny's!





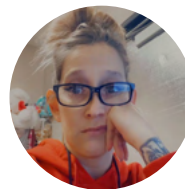
## Women's History Month Recognitions



Dorothea McHugh

WestCare's Homefront VA Transitional Housing program has some of the luckiest and most grateful staff in Reno, NV to have the privilege to work with and know **Dorothea McHugh**. Dorothea provides the most amazing and incredible care for 20 Veterans daily and would have it no other way! She was a champion throughout the pandemic and saved several lives due to her diligence and empathy. Dorothea never missed a day of work and at times, she would come in early to ensure that all of her clients were safe and well. If she thought that someone might be coming down with something, she would make sure that it was addressed immediately. There was a day when one of her elderly clients did not respond when she attempted to contact him via phone. So, she immediately sprang into action by assessing the situation and assisting that client with obtaining emergency care for COVID-19 as he was having difficulty breathing. That client is well and healthy today because of her fast and professional response. Dorothea always ensured that all protocols were followed and were up to date to keep the rest of the population safe. She is the glue that held Homefront together during the pandemic and still is. She is our rock. Her bravery and nonstop dedication not only saved lives but served as an inspiration to us all. Dorothea leads not just by her actions, but her unfailing compassion for others. Dorothea is our hero and we would not want it any other way!

By Sher Stevens, Program Manager



Karen Cavazos

**Karen Cavazos** has been a shining example of a strong leader in the fight against COVID-19 both at work and in her personal life during the last two years of the pandemic. During the height of the pandemic, Karen was one of a handful of volunteers to shelter in place and care for residents infected with COVID-19 to ensure the safety and health of residents and staff. She selflessly gave her time and attention despite her own personal battles with COVID-19 and its effects on her own immediate family. Karen has taken a leadership role in testing and caring for clients and our **Community Triage Center** and putting aside her own challenges to ensure that the most vulnerable clients have a safe place to recover. She has balanced work and her own commitments to alumni and her personal recovery journey to make a path to recovery for the newcomers. She shares her personal victory as a graduate of the **Women's and Children's Program** to help instill hope and courage in the clients she serves. I would like to take a moment to honor her commitment and dedication to WestCare Nevada and the fight against COVID-19.

By Todd Edwards, Clinical Director



Irma Magrdichian

In observance of Women's History Month, I would like to recognize Irma Magrdichian, Director of Residential Treatment Programs. This year's theme is "Women Providing Healing, Promoting Hope," and she truly embodies this value.

She is a wife, a mother, and the middle child of an immigrant mother from Mexico. She rarely speaks of her childhood growing up in Los Angeles, CA, sharing most of life to have been ungracious and unsympathetic at times. What has become of that young girl today is a woman of strength, resilience, and durability.

Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, she has taken an active role in the execution, implementation, and application of COVID-19 protocols, policies, and guidelines while overseeing both the women's and men's residential inpatient treatment programs. During these times, she has worked tirelessly with representatives of the Nevada Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Public & Behavioral Health, and the Centers for Disease Control (CDC). One representative wrote, "Thank you so much as always for your diligence and updating REDCap in a timely manner!" On a separate occasion, another wrote, "Thank you so much as always, Irma! We appreciate your diligence in protecting the health and wellness of the employees and clients."

She also took the lead in offering COVID-19 vaccinations to clients in both the women's and men's programs, hosting multiple vaccination clinics, both on and off-site. Her efforts were recognized through the following statements, "That is great news! Thank you so much for your diligence in getting everyone tested with such short notice. I really appreciate all your efforts to protect your clients and employees. Thanks again for your dedication and hard work, Ms. Irma, and [the] WestCare Team. I want to say again how lucky your staff and clients are to have you protecting them."

Irma Magrdichian has a passion for serving others, in particular, women in recovery. She has shared that her story mirrors that of many of the women who come through the program. Her big heart and kind smile make her a woman to be recognized during this month of celebrating women and their contributions to making this world a better place. I am honored to call her a friend.

By Gardis Canty, Clinical Manager

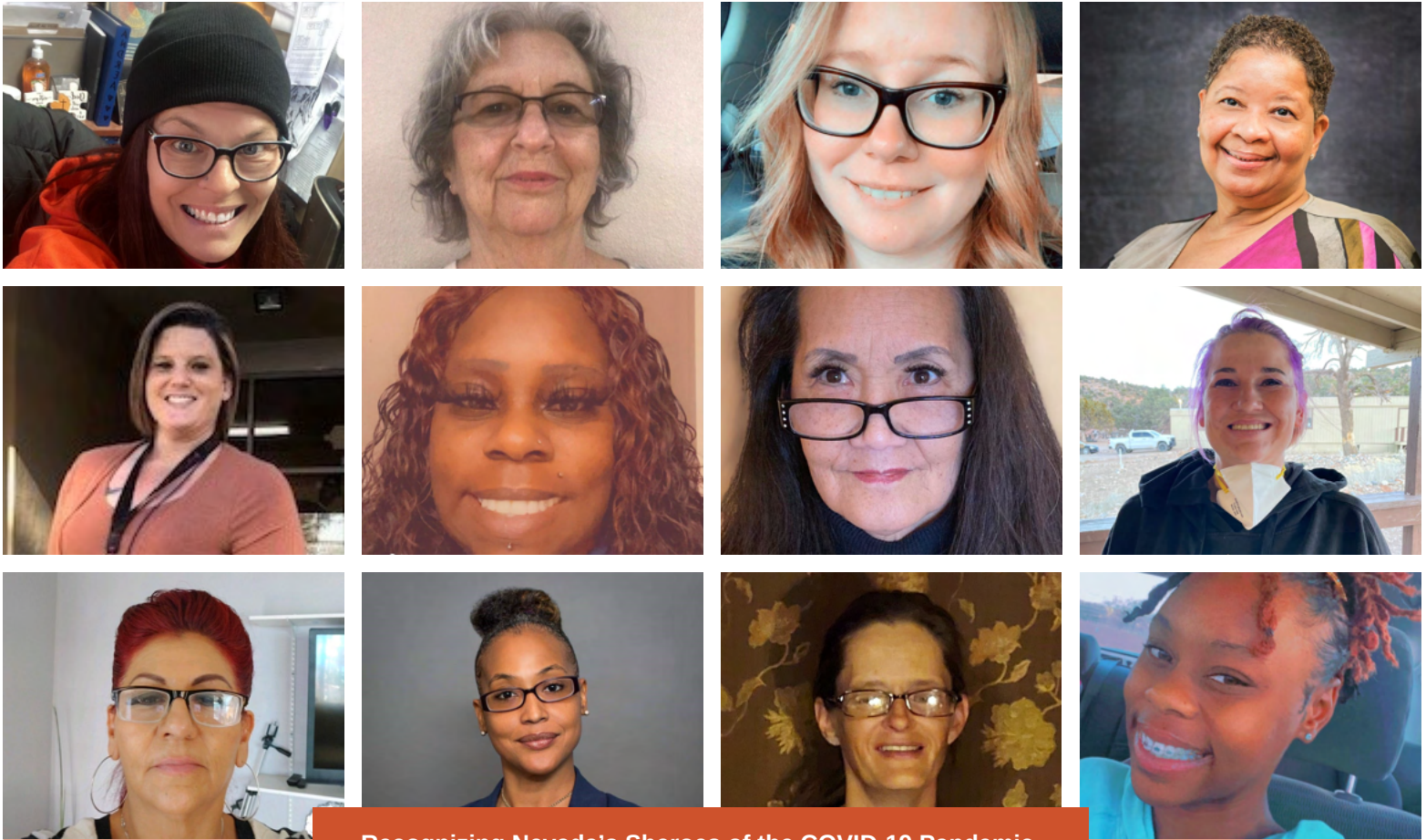


Marybel Ramos

With the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, outpatient services across the country found a challenge in continuing to provide treatment services to clients while working within the constraints of the pandemic. Our **Community Involvement Center (CIC)** immediately mitigated this issue by implementing a telehealth option for all outpatient groups to allow clients to continue to receive treatment services at the intensive outpatient and outpatient levels. Though such a modality was proven useful amidst the pandemic, the transition and ongoing usage of such platforms do not come with ease for our outpatient clinicians.

**Marybel Ramos**, LADC and CPC-I, has been providing services to WestCare clients for over five years. She currently facilitates two outpatient groups and an intensive outpatient group, which totals 11 hours of group counseling a week - in addition to numerous individual sessions. Marybel is often the first to volunteer for additional group coverage, especially as the CIC faced mass staff outages with COVID-19 cases throughout the pandemic. She has proven to be an immense support to not only her clients but to her fellow staff. Despite the challenges and hardships brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic and the implementation of telehealth technology, Marybel has continued to work tirelessly to provide much-needed treatment to her clients and to support her CIC team. She pivoted as quickly as possible to a remote format and bore the associated challenges with grace, in addition to supporting other clinicians in their efforts as the need arose. Similarly, Marybel was understanding of the difficulties and limitations of remote groups and willing to work with her clients, while still maintaining the highest ethical standards. "It's been challenging and an adjustment," said Marybel. "I will continue to Uplift the Human Spirit to the best of my abilities using any means to my disposal to meet the client where they're at and address client needs."

By Chabrian Tanguay, Research Assistant and Andrea Lopez, Coordinator of Community Behavioral Health



## Recognizing Nevada's Sheroes of the COVID-19 Pandemic

By Irma Magrdichian, Director of Residential Services

During this month of recognizing Women's History and those who have gone above and beyond to provide healing and instill hope in the lives of those who find themselves seeking strength, we applaud the frontline caregivers who have worked tirelessly during this COVID-19 pandemic.

The **Women and Children's Campus** jumped to action in September of 2020 where Ms. Gardis Canty, Ms. Rhonda Davisson, Ms. Tina Morton, Ms. Karen Cavazos, and I sheltered-in-place at the facility for 14 tiresome days providing room-to-room medication observation, preparing and serving all meals, conducting COVID-19 wellness checks, and adhering to sanitizing protocols while maintaining close communication with WestCare's COVID-19 response team and the **Southern Nevada Health District**. In recent months, several staff stepped up to become FIT Test Certified to care for clients in isolation. These much-appreciated women consisted of Ms. Kristy Edwards, Ms. Sherice Lellek, Ms. Sharon Berman, Ms. Victoria Moten, Ms. Courtney Reimer, Ms. LaVonne Young, Ms. Nikhail Young-McCall, and Ms. Mar-cha Bell. In addition, Ms. Gardis, Ms. Tina, and Ms. Rhonda also requested to be recertified. Together, we ensured that therapeutic services were not disrupted and that Centers for Disease Control's (CDC) guidelines were followed. Ms. Gardis, her team, and Ms. Mar-cha provided groups and individual small group sessions via telecommunication from within the facility to those in isolation while Ms. Kristy and her team ensured COVID-19 protocols and safety procedures were followed. Ms. Rhonda has remained diligent to ensure that the point-of-entry procedures are followed and continues to monitor proper completion of COVID-19 signs/symptoms questionnaires

along with mask mandate adherence for those that enter the facility. Ms. Tina continues to ensure the facility maintains PPE and disinfectant supplies.

**Harris Springs Ranch** recently buckled down in February when several FIT Tested staff from the Women and Children's Campus assisted in the sheltering-in-place of all six cabins. Ms. Maria Valencia with the assistance of Ms. Kristy and Ms. Rhonda worked long hours to ensure all meals were served in accordance with CDC guidelines while Ms. Mar-cha and Ms. Andrea along with other staff ensured proper COVID-19 procedures and safety precautions were followed while providing cabin-to-cabin therapeutic services. During this instance, we were better prepared to deliver services in a manner that had the least impact on our clientele and an abundance of CDC-approved staff to attend to the clinical and therapeutic needs of persons served. Ms. Andrea Raney, Ms. Stephanie Ford, and Ms. Samantha Maine volunteered to be FIT Test certified along with other staff to properly care for the clients on camp during these worrisome times.

I am honored to work with such amazing women that do not hesitate to sign themselves up for the challenges brought upon by the pandemic. They are the heroes that have maintained the frontline and have played a crucial role during the pandemic. I cannot say enough about the work they have provided to Nevada's most vulnerable and underserved populations in a manner that demonstrates respect and that truly honors WestCare's motto of Uplifting the Human Spirit.

Connect with us in Nevada

Get in touch with our Marketing Department to learn more about what is happening in WestCare Nevada at [marketing@westcare.com](mailto:marketing@westcare.com)