

The Sun

Spring Edition 2023



Be Patient With Yourself.

Nothing In Nature
Blooms All Year

We Are Open

Coastal Plains Community Center serves the 9 counties of the Coastal Bend. Normal hours are, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday—Friday. We encourage all staff and consumers to wear masks and sanitize as necessary. We continue to observe social distancing, isolation and quarantine rules as outlined by the CDC.





March

National Developmental
Disabilities Awareness Month
National Social Work Month
Women's History Month

April

Autism Acceptance Month
National Sexual Assault Awareness
and Prevention Month
National Alcohol Awareness Month

May

Mental Health Awareness Month
Military Appreciation Month
Family Wellness Month

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Spring
2023



Children's Mental Health Acceptance Month

This year Coastal Plains Community Center (CPCC) continued their celebration of Children's Mental Health Acceptance Month with presentations, contests, and proclamations through out the Coastal Bend. Previously celebrated, CPCC had annual recognized May as Mental Health Awareness Month however last year CPCC decided it was time to move forward onto ACCEPTANCE. While many people may have an awareness of what a mental health challenge can look like, many people may still struggle to accept that themselves or someone they know is facing those challenges. The purpose of these changes are to not just the spread of knowledge regarding mental health but to encourage acknowledgment, acceptance, and reduce the stigma of mental health. Mental illness is nothing to be ashamed of and it is CPCC's goal to educate and encourage conversation.

Teens, children, and adolescents of all ages and backgrounds can face mental illness. Many unsure if they should ask for help or how they should treat it. The reason behind this can be linked to a lack of knowledge regarding mental health or a lack of encouragement to discuss it. The stigma surrounding mental health often leaves families ashamed or fearful to seek treatment for their child. They may fear backlash or criticism from family, peers, and society.

In order to encourage the discussion around mental health, CPCC staff coordinated with several independent school districts (ISD) to host presentations for today's youth. Headed by Community Liaison Sierra Zavala CPCC presented to ISD's such as , Sinton ISD, Alice ISD, Riviera ISD and Kingsville ISD of which Sierra is an Alumni. Several school based symposiums were also attended as both vendors and speakers. This included the San Diego ISD Teen Summit and the Falfurrias ISD Youth Summit. Various outreach events were also attended to share resources with the local communities. By attending these events, CPCC hopes to encourage more families and children more open to seek services for their emotional needs.

Proclamations declaring May as Children's Mental Health Acceptance Month were also acknowledged by the rural counties surrounding Nueces. Several directors including Children's Mental Health Director Linda Ramos-Perez, Quality Management Director Jorge De Los Santos, Taft Clinic Director Amy Pina, and more were present to represent CPCC.

This year Coastal Plains hosted their annual Youth Mental Health Celebrations in each clinic. Youth consumers and their families were invited to celebrate their successes or recovery with games, activities and food. Youth of all ages attended with CPCC staff present.

A Door Decorating Contest was also held in each clinic and judged based on its message and craftsmanship. This would be its 3rd year returning with the theme for this Month as "Make



A Beat For Children's Mental Health—The Power of Music. "The intention of these contests are to uplift our consumers when they visit the clinics. It doesn't need to feel like another doctor's office. CPCC staff wants to connect with our community and show them they are here for support.

This years grand prize went to Melanie Gracia of Alice.

Photos of the Door Decorating Contest can be found on page 7.

From directors to case managers, many different CPCC staff were able to utilize their time and resources to make this campaigns a success. Staff such as Sierra Zavala, YES Program Coordinator Imelda Barrera, Youth Case Manger Abigail Vasquez, Youth Program Manager Sylvia Castillo and many more deserve recognition for their dedication to mental health awareness. They ensure all events go off without a hitch and are ready to help when obstacles arise. CPCC staff never fail to advocate for the acceptance of mental health which in plays an enormous part in our day to day lives.



Sequential Intercept Model Workshop

On April 27th through the 28th Coastal Plains Community Center partnered in the initial Sequential Intercept Model Workshop (SIM) for San Patricio County. The SIM Workshop was held at the County Fairgrounds to bring together community partners of San Patricio. This allowed the participants to work together to identify available resources, determine gaps in available services, and make plans for change. Various resources including the San Patricio Health Department, Sinton Police Department, Sinton Housing Authority more, participated in assessing current climates of their communities and identifying possible solutions. Judge Karen Diaz led the initiative to bring forth this workshop to the county.



Among those who helped organize this event together included Coastal Plains Chief Executive Officer Leo Trejo the Honorable Judge Elizabeth Welborn, and San Patricio County Judge David Krebs and the San Patricio County planning team consisting of Clinic Director Stephanie McCoy, San Patricio PreTrial Services Supervisor Callie Adkins, Oceans Healthcare Marketing Development Director Debra Saenz, Clinic Director Amy Pina, and San Patricio Constable Kody Farenthold. The workshop was facilitated by Lynda Frost, JD, PhD and Douglas Smith, MSSW, ACC.



Coastal Plains Staff including Quality Management Director Jorge De Los Santos, Stephanie McCoy and Faculty Safety Technician Joe Phillips spoke to the attendees regarding their experiences in the field and providing input.

Key priorities identified from this workshop included information exchange among law enforcement, specialized health court, community awareness and education, and transportation.

The Sequential Intercept Model was developed by Mark R. Munetz, M.D. and Patricia A. Griffin, Ph.D., in conjunction with SAMSHA's GAINS Center.

Koalafied Outreach Worker Star Nomination



In May 2023, Mental Health First Aid Coordinator, Annette Quam was nominated for the Koalafied Outreach Worker Star Award. This award brings awareness to the MHFA Outreach Worker position and celebrate their work. Submitted Quote: "If anyone deserves to be recognized for their hard work regarding Mental Health First Aid outreach, it is Annette Quam. Her positive attitude inspires everyone around her to be their best selves. She works tirelessly to teach and spread awareness of MHFA to the 9 counties of Coastal Plains Community Center. The MHFA program would not be the same without her unceasing dedication and strong support to her fellow trainers and those in the community."



Coastal Plains' Primary Care Program

By Leonel B. Trejo Jr.

Our Center has been providing primary care services for over thirteen (13) years. We started off with a small grant that offered screenings and basic care in our Alice clinic. At that time we had Community Action Corporation of South Texas (CACOST) providing this service out of a mobile clinic. Our clients in that area responded favorably to this service and we decided to look to expand this care across all clinics. Cost was a big factor in the planning process, however, at the time 1115 waiver DSRIP dollars were rolling out and we were able to receive federal funding to expand this care. We initially contracted this service with CACOST since they were our original partners, but over time we ended up partnering with Coastal Bend Wellness Foundation (CBWF)

since they were able to provide this service in all our clinics. Recently with workforce shortages and capacity issues CBWF's ability to meet our needs became more of a challenge. CBWF was no longer able to keep up with the amount of patients we were referring to them and decided that the best option was to end our contract. There were several Centers across the state of Texas who had stopped providing this care and were only screening and referring this service out. I decided that we were going to continue to provide this care due to the significant impact it had on our Adult population. I knew this was not going to be an easy task since we had never directly provided this type of care or billed for these types of services. There was going to be a lot of work involved setting-up our electronic health record and challenges with recruitment. However, I was confident that our management team would rise to the challenge.

We currently have hired a family nurse practitioner and an LVN for our team. We are in the process of contracting with a doctor to provide medical oversight of our primary care program. Our goal is to get the team trained and begin providing these services again in August. In the interim CBWF has assured us that all clients who were opened to their care would continue receiving prescriptions for their medications until we get our team delivering care. Our focus has always been to improve healthcare in our nine counties. We have evolved from providing just mental health services to an integrated model of that care that includes mental health, primary care and substance use services. We will continue to sustain this integrated model of care since it improves access to needed care, is cost effective and provides the best outcomes for our clients served by the Center.

Coastal Plains Welcomes New Chairman and 5 New Board Members



Kleberg County Judge
Chairman
Rudy Madrid



Jim Wells County Judge
Vice-Chairman
Pedro Trevino, Jr.



San Patricio County
Judge
Secretary
Tom Yardley



Live Oak
County Judge
Board Member
James Liska



Duval County Judge
Board Member
Arnold Cantu



Kenedy County Judge
Board Member
Charles Burns

Meet Our Psychiatric Nurse Practitioner



In December 2021, Norma Vela signed on to become Coastal Plains Community Center's first Psychiatric Nurse Practitioner working multiple offices in the CPCC rural catchment area. Norma was introduced to Coastal Plains by enrolling in the Student/Volunteer Program to complete her Clinical Hours for her certification to become a Psychiatric Nurse Practitioner. While enrolled in this program, Norma shadowed Medical Director Dr. Umamaheswara Rao Maruvada, who oversaw her preceptorship in psychiatry. Norma's success and dedication in her preceptorship showed her diligent work ethic and innate ability to create an immediate therapeutic alliance with the clients of CPCC. After she completed her certifications, CPCC was swift to offer her employment becoming the center's first Board Certified Psychiatric Mental Health Nurse Practitioner.

Dr. Maruvada, Dr. Rayasam, Dr. Mangnipudi and Norma Vela all work conjunctly to provide psychiatric services for the rural counties of the Coastal Bend. Norma works multiple centers including the Kingsville, Beeville, Aransas Pass, Rockport, Taft, and Alice locations while also coordinating with the other Doctors on staff to fill in services as needed. Dr. Maruvada, Dr. Rayasam and Dr. Mangipudi have provided effective psychiatric care for CPCC for 35+ years and have incorporated Norma Vela their current system with confidence. "I know I can go to any of them with questions regarding how different clinics are run because everything is run a little differently," Norma remarks.

Norma received her education from the University of Texas at Austin in 1994 with a Bachelors of Science in Nursing. In 2009 she completed her Masters Degree in Nursing Education through the University of Phoenix. Following her preceptorship with Coastal Plains Community Center, she completed her psychiatric mental health post masters certification from Maryville University in August 2021.

Norma comes with 29 years of experience in varied areas of nursing with 18 years in the rural intensive care at CHRISTUS Spohn Kleberg Hospital. She has also served as a Clinical Assistant Professor for Texas A&M University Corpus Christi for 13 years. "This is when my interest in psychiatric nursing and psychiatric care really started to blossom. Psychiatric care has been important to me ever since my pre-nursing experience. I do have lots of family members that have been affected in numerous ways with schizophrenia, depression, anxiety. It always spoke to me very loudly." Norma has worked for numerous organizations in the Coastal Bend Area including serving as a Community Liaison for the Coastal Bend Regional Health Education Collaborative while at TAMU-CC teaching Bachelors and Masters level students.

In having a drive to continue to educate others, Norma will also assist in the supervision of other Nurse Practitioners completing their preceptorship through the Student/Volunteer Program. Norma is the first of hopefully many success stories of Nurse Practitioners seeking a career in mental health with Coastal Plains.

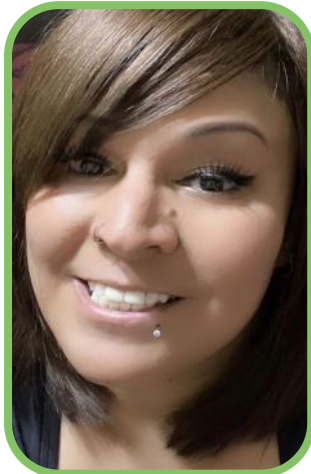
Student/Volunteer Program

Coastal Plains Community Center provides continuing education and work experience through the Student/Volunteer Program. The program offers unpaid training opportunities to community members and students at a college level. These opportunities provide work experience in a mental health care setting, including but not limited to secretarial duties, case management, and clinical hours for preceptorships. This program allows individuals to explore career options, as well as develop their personal and professional skills. A recent feature of this program included the collaboration of Coastal Bend College to rotate students with CPCC Nursing Staff to obtain clinical hours in a mental health setting for their LVN certifications. The goal of this program is to further the education of students and motivate them to seek employment within the mental health field.

Students applying for this program are recommended to apply at least one month in advance to secure placement. Student and Volunteers may apply for this program by the Community Liaison Sierra Zavala at 361-777-3991.



Overcoming the Storm



Denise Curtess has strived for personal improvement through various trials and tribulations. An active individual and phenomenal singer, Denise is a prime example striving for mental wellness in the face of adversity.

Denise has been coming to Coastal Plains Community Center for a little over 10 years for depression, anxiety and post traumatic stress disorder. Originally from the Rockport area, Denise has faced many hardships in life that have affected her mental health in ways many commonly see times of stress. After her first pregnancy, Denise was diagnosed with postpartum depression. She enrolled in the Coastal Plains mental health program in Rockport following the continued signs and symptoms for depression and anxiety.

After Hurricane Harvey, Denise had lost many of her belongings including her place of residence. Not only did she lose her property, but she also lost her beloved pets. While being taken in by some close friends until she could get settled on her feet, this event had left her at a loss for what to do. During this time she received help from FEMA and Coastal Plains apply for different programs to help with necessities.

After the loss of her property, she relocated to Portland, TX where she continued to receive services from Coastal Plains. Her services transitioned to the Taft location as a closer option. Though still a town away with no mode of transportation, Denise has utilized various transportation programs such as Camino R.E.A.L and Feonix Mobility Rising to attend CPCC services, doctors appointments, and occasionally run errands. Mike Gregg, Adult Peer Support Specialist, has also been a strong support helping to transport her to the Taft center for appointments and peer support meetings. Assisted by Care Coordinator Yvette Hasette whom was hosting Wellness Classes for Coastal Plains at the time, Denise was able to manage her diet and strive to improve her physical and mental health.

During her occupation as a home provider, Denise was featured in the hit TLC program *"My 600 lb Life"* caring for one of the guests. Following the COVID-19 pandemic, Denise had lost her job and was in need of a medical procedure putting more pressure on her mental state. Despite this, Denise had not stopped coming to Coastal Plains and continued to work on herself.

Denise is active in her community singing with her praise and worship group and also lending her voice to the Del Mar College Choir. "Singing definitely makes me happy especially when I sing with my groups," she remarks. Denise also teaches music class to the vacation bible school and volunteers with her church's nursery. She also loves dancing and goes to Zumba with her son. Working out and exercising also been a huge positive for her psychical and mental health.

Trial after trial Denise continued to push herself to get better. She pushes herself to go outside when she feels herself coming down. Even when she has her bad days she forces herself. Denise remarks she has felt a lot happier. "I used to have days where I just don't care if I worked out or not. I didn't go out as much. I gained a lot of weight. Now I eat right. I go to the gym. I go out more with my kids. I take my medications and meet with Mike. Its really been helping my wellness."

Know Your Rights

You have the right to make a complaint about services.

You have the right to be told about Disability Rights Texas for both inpatient and outpatient care. Their purpose is to protect and to speak up for your rights.

Have a Complaint?

Call the Right Office at
361-777-3991 or
1-888-819-5312
RightsOffice@coastalplainsctr.org

If you believe that you have been abused or neglected, you should report this to:
Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS)
1-800-647-7418

GRAND PRIZE WINNER

BEST BOOR

MELANIE GRACIA



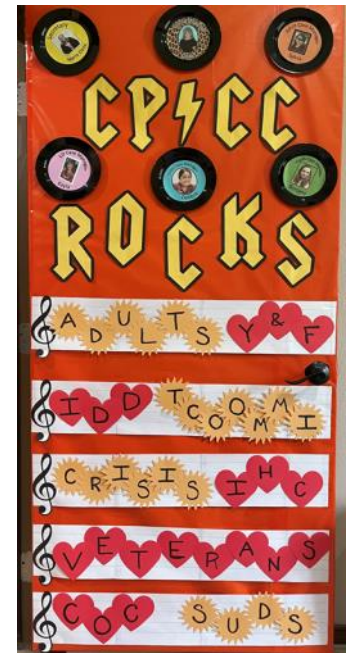
Alice



Portland 1st Place
Melissa Campos



Taft 1st Place
Janet Garcia



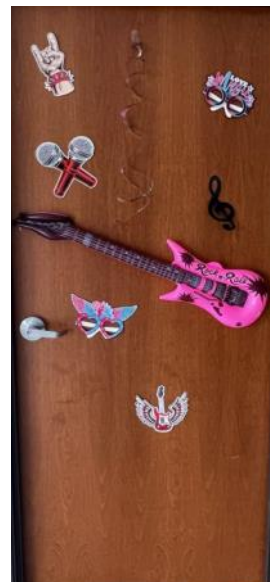
San Diego 1st Place
Sylvia Rodriguez



Beeville 1st Place
Susie Diaz



Kingsville 1st Place
JoAnna Mora



Aransas Pass
1st Place
Sylvia Castillo



Falfurrias 1st Place
Juanita Pena

Mental Health Fact**Music Can Help
You**

Reduce Anxiety

Improve memory

Connect with Others

Express Your
Emotions

Sleep

Improve Focus

*Rolling With The Punches*

Lila Coria and her mother, Iris Rios, moved to Ricardo, Texas in 2019 from the Rio Grande Valley. "Moving to a small town, we kind of had a bit of a culture shock between meeting new people and making new friends." Following the loss of a close friend to suicide, Lila had a difficult relationship with her mother and siblings, showing combativeness, profanity and an overall change in personality after her loss. Processing difficulty processing their predicament, the family was referred to the Coastal Plains Community Center for Youth Services.

The transition had been difficult, taking a lot of time and effort especially during the pandemic. With the guidance of the Youth and Family Program and multiple people such as Youth Case Manager Crystal Zavala and Licensed Professional Counselor Amanda Benavides, Iris feels the program helped to strengthen their family's relationship of which also provided parenting education. Lila was enrolled in the Youth Empowerment Services (YES) program which provides more intensive services for youth enrolled. Through the YES program she was able to obtain a referral to the Waco Center for Youth. The Waco Center for Youth is a long-term psychiatric residential treatment facility that serves teens ages 13-17 experiencing emotional and behavioral issues. Lila's mother feels this program marked a turning point for her daughter's mental health. Lila was provided recreational therapy, group and individual therapy, skills training and anger management.

Iris Rios currently serves as a member of the Planning Network Advisory Committee (PNAC). This committee is composed of CPCC consumers or parents/guardians of consumers, providing input on CPCC activities, grant updates and other MH or IDD services. Outside of CPCC, the family currently attends Family Therapy with the



Photo by cottonbro studio

Family Counseling Services in Kingsville, Texas. This service provides them with additional opportunities to address their feelings towards each other and work towards their own mental health goals.

Following the separation of her parents, Lila had continued pushing to better herself and her mental health. At 15 years old Lila graduated at a high school level in September of 2022 through a home-schooling program. She has ambitions of going pro in boxing and regularly trains at the Kingsville Boxing Club of which is also run by CPCC's Veterans Coordinator Jaime Cantu. Iris states that, "Jaime Cantu has been a mentor to me and my daughter and has been a strong support in Lila's growth." While Lila has goals of pursuing a boxing career she has also expressed an interest in studying forensic science.

When asked about how she feels about her hardships and accomplishments, she stated at times she feels exhausted. "A lot of times I feel like I need to constantly push myself to prove that I am smart, I am strong and that I am going to make it. I like to strive for more."

Lila is a strong, resilient individual and Coastal Plains is proud of her growth.



Assemble an Emergency Kit

- First aid supplies,
- A flashlight, extra batteries
- Non-perishable foods
- Water
- Towels
- Medications
- Battery or hand crank radio
- Moist towelettes, garbage bags and plastic ties for personal sanitation
- Wrench or pliers to turn off utilities
- Manual can opener for food
- Local maps
- Cell phone with chargers and a backup battery

DO YOU HAVE A PLAN

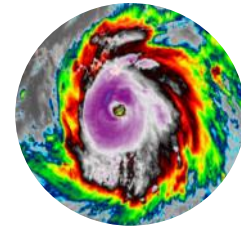
The State Of Texas offers the option to register with the STEAR program, a free registry that provides local emergency management planners and responders with information related to your needs during an emergency. Available services will vary by community. This program is free to local governments and individuals. For more information on how your community will use information in the STEAR registry, contact your local emergency management office.

How to Register • <https://STEAR.tdem.texas.gov> • Dial 2-1-1 or use your video phone relay option of choice to contact 211 • Printed or electronic forms (Contact your local government)

If you are a consumer of Coastal Plains Community Center. Talk to your case manager about how to register.

Who Should Register?

- People with disabilities
- People who are medically fragile.
- People with functional needs. Such as:
 1. Limited mobility
 2. Communication barriers
 3. Require additional medical assistance during an emergency event
- Require personal care assistance
- People who require transportation assistance.



Feonix Mobility Rising

Transportation has been a continuous barrier to obtain quality mental health care in rural areas. In order to improve access to care, Coastal Plains Community Center, and Feonix-Mobility Rising have partnered to provide transportation for CPCC consumers. Feonix-Mobility Rising, a non-profit focusing on improving mobility options for under-served and vulnerable populations in the rural counties in the Coastal Bend of Texas. Through this partnership, CPCC can now arrange for their consumers to be transported by Feonix to not only CPCC appointments but other healthcare centers such as primary care doctors appointments. In order to qualify for transportation Feonix a person must be screened for a substance use disorder however a person does not need to be diagnosed to utilize this service.



A Look Ahead...

Coastal Plains Community Center set plans into motion to construct a Substance Use Facility adjacent to the Alice Clinic. Substance use services are currently available provided within the Alice Clinic and this expansion will help to facilitate those services.

Kingsville Resident Donates School Supplies



Kingsville resident donates 13 Javelina school backpacks to the Coastal Plains Community Center Youth and Family program. The resident expressed he feels Coastal Plains does a lot for the kids in the community and he wanted to show his appreciation. As the cost of living goes up, the resident feels this can be a relief to families struggling to afford school supplies. “Kids have it real hard right now and I hope these bags can help. Plus they will probably look cool with the TAMUK college bags.” The Youth and Family Program will distribute the bags to youth enrolled for services if in need of them. Chief Executive Officer Leo Trejo thanks the resident on behalf of Coastal Plains for showing his support of children's mental health with his generous donation.

Summer Observations



June

PTSD Awareness Month
Men's Mental Health Month
Pride Month

July

Minority Mental Health
Awareness Month
Social Wellness Month
UV Safety Awareness Month

August

Back to School Month
National Breastfeeding Month
National Immunization Awareness Month



Meet the Author

Sierra Zavala

Community Relations Coordinator

Have questions or comments about the newsletter? Please email Sierra Zavala at:

szavala@coastalplainsctr.org



Find us on Facebook

Coastal Plains Community Center

@CPCCMHIDD

Visit our website at:

www.coastalplainsctr.org



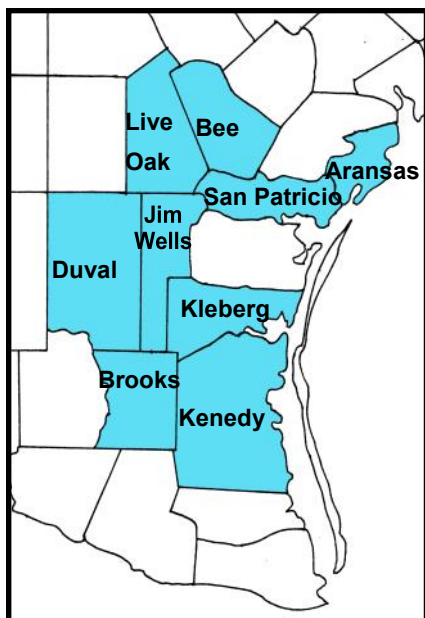
Portland Administrative Office

200 Marriot Drive

Portland, Texas 78374

361-777-3991

We're Here-Where You Live



Aransas County

Rockport Mental Health Center

620 E. Concho

Rockport, TX 78382-1446

361-727-0988

Aransas Pass Mental Health Center

1010 S. Commercial

Aransas Pass, TX 78336

361-226-3022

Bee and Live Oak Counties

Beeville Center for Integrated Health & IDD Services

2808 Industrial Loop Blvd.

Beeville, TX 78102

361-358-8000

Brooks County

Falfurrias Center for Integrated Health & IDD Services

101 W. Potts

Falfurrias, TX 78355

361-325-9776

Jim Wells & Duval Counties

Alice Center for

Integrated Health & IDD Services

614 W. Front St.

Alice, TX 78332

361-664-9587

San Diego Mental Health Clinic

409 E Gravis

San Diego Tx 78384

361-279-7296

Kenedy and Kleberg Counties

Kingsville Center for

Integrated Health & IDD Services

1621 East Corral

Kingsville, TX 78363

361-592-6481

San Patricio County

Taft Center for Integrated Health & IDD

201 Roots Ave.

Taft, TX 78390

361-528-4516

Coastal Plains Community Center

200 Marriott Drive

Portland, Texas 78374

1-888-819-5312

coastalplainsctr.org

