



CHUCK'S CHRONICLES

The latest news and announcements from the Thriving Third!

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Students of the Month

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FROM THE DESK OF CHUCK WASHINGTON



Supervisor Washington was a pilot in the Navy

November Edition: This One's for the Vets!

With Veterans Day just around the corner, it is fitting to think of the ways in which we, as individuals and as a community, can help veterans. Veterans have served their country honorably – now it is our turn to serve them. I am thrilled that November's edition of Chuck's Chronicles is all about vets. From the Riverside County Department of Veterans' Services to the two nonprofit spotlights, this month's newsletter is filled with great resources. We're taking a break from our series on roads for now, but it will resume in February. If you or a loved one is a veteran, I hope you can find some useful information in the following pages. ~ Chuck



VETERANS ASSISTANCE & EVENTS

American Legion Post 852

36505 Winchester Rd., Murrieta

Office: 951-305-0852

Email: commander@al852tmv.org

Website: www.al852tmv.org

Veterans Supplemental Support Network

Office: 951-821-8776

Website: www.vetsupportnet.org

Reaching New Heights Foundation

4053 Chestnut St, #203, Riverside

For benefit eligibility and enrollment info

Office: 951-878-6696

Email: rhinc3@att.net

Riverside County Department of Veterans Services

4360 Orange St, Riverside

Office: 844-737-8838

Website: veteranservices.co.riverside.ca.us

Veteran Sisters

30141 Antelope Rd. Ste. D674 Menifee,

Office: 951-305-3244

Email: Admin@VeteranSisters.org

Murrieta VA Clinic at Loma Linda University Medical Center

28078 Baxter Road. STE 540, Murrieta

Office: 800-741-8387 x 5312

Eligibility representative is onsite on Thursdays.

Community Connection

Anza Valley Municipal Advisory Council

Location: Anza Community Hall

56630 Highway 371, Anza

Next meeting: November 13, 2019

Website: www.anzavalleymac.com

Information: 951-955-1030

City of Hemet: 951-765-2300

City of Murrieta: 951-304-2489

City of Temecula: 951-694-6444

City of San Jacinto: 951-487-7330

Winchester/Homeland Municipal Advisory Council

Location: Frances Domenigoni Community Center

32665 Haddock Street, Winchester

Next meeting: November 14, 2019

Website: www.winchestermac.org

Information: 951-955-1030

Hemet/San Jacinto Valley Chamber: 951-658-3211

Murrieta/Wildomar Chamber: 951-677-7916

Temecula Valley Chamber: 951-676-5090

San Jacinto Chamber: 951-654-1645

County of Riverside Offers Job Assistance for Veterans

As a Navy veteran, Supervisor Washington knows it can be tough to adjust to life after military service. Veterans face a number of barriers to entering the civilian workforce, including a lack of transitional assistance, difficulty translating military skills to civilian jobs, employers' inexperience with military culture and veterans' unrealistic expectations about the ease of moving from military to civilian employment. Now veterans in Riverside County will have extra help with that transition thanks to a grant approved by the Board of Supervisors.



The County of Riverside was awarded more than \$488,000 in federal funds to support our Veterans' Employment-Related Assistance Program. The money will help the third-largest veteran population in the state; Riverside County is home to an estimated 126,400 veterans. Helping veterans make a smooth transition from the military workforce to civilian careers is a top priority for the County of Riverside.

This program is dedicated to educating businesses and industries on the benefits of hiring veterans, while also ensuring that veterans have the necessary skills to compete in today's workforce. Program participants will receive individualized employment plans that cater to their unique needs. Participants will be able to attend workshops designed for veterans transitioning into civilian careers and will receive job search and employment assistance. They will also have access to postsecondary education leading to industry-standard credentials or certificates, earn and learn activities, on-the-job training and apprenticeships. Throughout this process, participants will receive individualized support and follow-up activities.

The ultimate goal is to help participants land jobs in high-paying, high-demand fields that show projected growth, including trade, transportation and utilities, education, healthcare and social assistance, construction, professional and business services and manufacturing.

Veterans and their spouses can apply to this valuable program until March 31, 2021. Interested applicants should contact EDA's Workforce Development Division at 951-955-0464. Veterans have worked hard to serve our nation – now it is the County's honor and privilege to serve them!

Special thanks to Leslie Trainor and T. Kim Pham for their contributions to this article.

Nonprofit Spotlight

Reaching New Heights Foundation

After serving in the U.S. Army and Army Reserves, Sgt. Maj. Gregory Coker personally witnessed fellow veterans struggle as they transitioned from military service to civilian life. That is why he and his wife, Tanya, founded Reaching New Heights Foundation. This nonprofit partners with numerous local government agencies, colleges, universities, nonprofits and businesses to provide a range of services to veterans.

One of the organization's most unique services is acting as the official nonprofit partner to the Riverside County Veterans Treatment Court. Veterans Treatment Court is a second chance for veterans who have committed crimes and are struggling with addictions and/or mental health conditions. The court aims to increase public safety while improving the lives of veterans and their families by treating the underlying causes of their troubles and promoting sobriety, recovery and stability. Reaching New Heights Foundation provides support to veterans going through Veterans Treatment Court through their Veteran Mentors Program. This program provides motivated individuals who serve as role models, supporters and guides to help their veteran mentees complete Veterans Treatment Court and move on to a stable and healthy civilian life. Many veterans feel more comfortable interacting with other veterans. This unique sense of camaraderie and trust is crucial for providing veterans with the support they need to change their behavior and sustain their sobriety and wellness.

Reaching New Heights Foundation also uses its partnerships to acquire transitional housing, jobs and educational opportunities for veterans. The Foundation is a great organization for finding resources. *(cont'd p. 5)*



Sgt. Major Coker, far left, congratulates a graduating class of Veterans Treatment Court.

Reaching New Heights Foundation, Cont'd

In fact, every year Reaching New Heights hosts the Inland Empire Veterans Stand Down event, which provides at-risk veterans with services, including food, showers, clothing, employment, legal aid, VA enrollment, counseling and much, much more!

Would you like to volunteer for Reaching New Heights Foundation or learn more about its services? Contact Sgt. Maj. Gregory Coker by calling 951-878-6900 or emailing rnhinc3@att.net. You can also learn more by visiting ReachingNewHeightsFoundation.com. The Reaching New Heights Foundation is working to save veterans' lives and create a better future for them.

Veterans' Services: A One-Stop Shop

There are many federal, state and local programs offered to veterans - so many that it can be difficult and time consuming to navigate all of them. Fortunately, the Riverside County Department of Veterans' Services is a one-stop shop for all veteran benefits and resources. County Veterans' Services staff can assist with applying for benefits with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and can access the VA's records to check an application's progress. If an application is rejected, Veterans' Services staff can help file an appeal. They also process applications for state programs, such as the College Fee Waiver for Veteran Dependents, which waives tuition and fees for veteran dependents at any California Community College, California State University or University of California. Finally, they can help find the unique opportunities and services provided by local nonprofits.

Director of Veterans' Services Grant Gautsche is proud of his staff members, who are highly trained, well-vetted professionals with multiple accreditations who are often veterans themselves.

"It's an honor for us to serve veterans. We are veterans serving veterans," Gautsche said.

To get connected with Veterans' Services, visit veteranservices.co.riverside.ca.us/ or call 951-955-3060.



The staff of the Department of Veterans' Services

Winter Wonderland Comes to Temecula Dec. 13

This holiday season, join the Veterans Supplemental Support Network and the Temecula Valley Unified School District as they transform the Temecula Valley High School gym for the Winter Wonderland holiday festival! This event is meant to warm the holiday season for more than 3,000 members of the active military and the veteran community. There will be festive decorations,



live music and dance performances, slides and jumpers, children's activities, catered dinners, treats, coffee and hot chocolate! Santa Claus will be present and available for photos! Special gifting will be offered to military and veteran families that need a little more help for the holidays, and all attendees ages 0 - 14 years old will enjoy toys from Santa. Admission is free, so come celebrate this holiday season! This event takes place from 5:30 p.m. to 9 p.m. Friday, Dec. 13 at the Temecula Valley High School gym, 31555 Rancho Vista Rd., Temecula.

Wanted: Veteran Employees, Businesses

With over 29,000 veterans, the Third District contains the largest veteran population in Riverside County. That is why Supervisor Washington joined Supervisor Perez in co-sponsoring a new policy designed to improve the lives of veterans and their families living in Riverside County. Among the policies and programs included in the new Veterans Improvement Program was a long-overdue update to the County's Veteran Employment Preference Program. The changes helped facilitate veterans and their spouses moving into the interview and selection process. Since the policy change in July 2018, 99 veterans have been hired! In addition to our hiring policy, the County gives preference to our business partners that are veteran-owned or that employ veterans. The County of Riverside knows that veterans are hardworking, highly skilled individuals who make valuable employees and business partners and who deserve recognition for their sacrifices. To find a job with the County, visit www.rc-hr.com. To become a business partner with the County, call 951-955-2318.



Nonprofit Spotlight:

WAVES Project

Another fantastic Third District nonprofit that deserves its own spotlight is the Temecula-based WAVES Project. WAVES stands for Wounded American Veterans Experience Scuba. Founded in 2013, the WAVES Project has served over 500 veterans from all branches of the military. The nonprofit organization uses scuba diving to assist veterans in their recovery from service-connected disabilities, including amputation, paraplegia, brain injuries, post-traumatic stress disorder and anxiety disorders. The program has proven that the therapeutic value of water can reduce pain through weightlessness and reduce anxiety by requiring the participants to focus on diving and controlling their breathing.

“Diving saved my marriage. I was harsh on my wife, my daughters, and everyone around me. Something had to change,” said WAVES Project diver Richard. Prior to joining the WAVES Project, Richard served honorably in the military for eight years and was released after a service-related injury. The WAVES Project offered Richard a tool to help manage his anxiety, rebuild relationships with his family and once again find the sense of camaraderie that he loved while in service.

One WAVES Project program that has a tremendous impact on veterans is the Mission Oriented Diving project, where they partner with the National Parks Service for historical and environmental conservation projects. In July 2019, a group of eight veteran divers worked with Dry Tortugas National Park in Florida assisting with buoy maintenance and environmental conservation efforts. (*cont'd p. 8*)



WAVES Project divers at the Veterans' Memorial in Avalon, Catalina Island, California

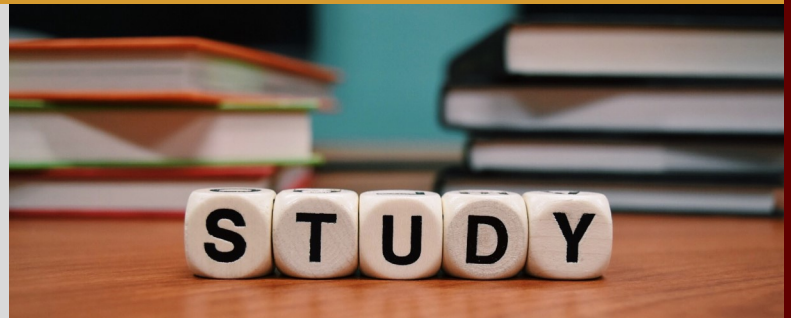
WAVES Project, cont'd

In November 2019, the WAVES Project will have its first all-female mission to work on the Channel Islands National Park in California, learning scientific diving techniques and supporting coastal clean-up operations. These missions allow veterans to utilize their scuba skills, serve their country and work on missions while building camaraderie, something many miss once their service is over.

The WAVES Project and their Mission Oriented Diving program are only possible through generous donations. This is not a federally funded program and depends upon support from the community. Currently, there are over 150 veterans on the waiting list. This is alarming, considering that the Veterans Administration reports 17 veterans take their own lives per day in the United States, which is 1.5 times the rate of the general population. To learn more about the foundation or to provide support, go to www.wavesproject.org.

Special thanks to Kristi Piatkowski, director of development for the WAVES Project, for writing this article.

October Students of the Month



Hemet Unified School District	Murrieta Unified School District
Hamilton High School <i>Ashley Sanchez</i>	Visit Murrieta High School <i>Nolan Clanton</i>
Hemet High School <i>Batool AbdalJawadp</i>	Murrieta Mesa High School <i>Ivana Hill</i>
Tahquitz High School <i>Luis Rodriguez</i>	Springs Charter School <i>Julie Eggleston</i>
West Valley High School <i>Desiree Castro</i>	Murrieta Valley High School <i>Marcos Britsch</i>
Alessandro High School <i>Katelyn Ochoa</i>	Murrieta Canyon Academy <i>Dylan Lambing</i>

San Jacinto Unified School District
Mountain View High School
Tomaije Barnes
San Jacinto High School
Aniah Arthurton

Temecula Unified School District
Chaparral High School
Giuliana Duron
Great Oak High School
Joshua Moore
Linfield Christian High School
Kaylee Thompson
Rancho Vista High School
Gabriella Alvarez
Susan H. Nelson High School
Tyler Jones
Temecula Valley High School
Aubree Gessel

The Third District Within the Community



Legislative Assistant Sundae Sayles represents Supervisor Washington at the ribbon cutting for PrimeCare of Temecula's new general practitioner, Dr. Dzenan Lulic (10-10-19).



Supervisor Washington and CHP Captain Mike Alvarez at the CHP Trunk or Treat event (10-31-19).



Supervisor Washington and the Third District staff pose for a picture on National Boss's Day (10-16-19).



Supervisor Washington attends the retirement celebration of Alice Sullivan, former president / CEO of the Temecula Valley Chamber of commerce (9-30-19).