

Cuyama Valley Family Resource Center (CVFRC)

"NEWSLETTER"



CVFRC History

First 5 Santa Barbara County had long recognized a need for services in the Cuyama Valley and had been funding Catholic Charities for several years to pay for a Family Advocate, Martha Yopez, to provide services in Cuyama. Due to an organizational restructuring, in 2006 Catholic Charities was unable to continue the valuable work they had done for many years in Cuyama. The Department of Social Services (DSS) stepped up to the plate, and with ongoing funding from First 5 SBC and County support, Martha was hired by DSS as the CVFRC Coordinator and services continued seamlessly. During her time at Catholic Charities, the County Public Health Clinic had generously provided Martha with office space; however, now that a full Family Resource Center operation was planned, space was becoming tight. Although the nature of the coordinator's work takes her out in the community for much of her time for home visits, client transport and community events, having a suitable space in the community that could accommodate parent meetings, walk-in service and a

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Family resource centers (FRC) are one-stop sites for families in rural, suburban or urban areas in need of services, resources and referrals. Staff help families by offering activities that educate, develop skills, involve problem solving and promote health and wellbeing. The goal of an FRC is to create healthy and functioning families and communities.



Meet the Coordinator...

Martha Yopez began working in Cuyama when she accepted a Family Advocate position with Catholic Charities in 2000. She immediately established a rapport with the families using her bi-lingual and bi-cultural skills, and over time has gained the trust and respect of the community.

Because of its uniqueness, working in Cuyama has been a challenge, but Martha has been successful in overcoming many obstacles. This is not your typical "sit in the office and wait for people to come to you 8-5" situation. Home visits to the remote farm areas, navigating washed out roads, transporting clients

to locations in Santa Barbara and Kern counties, and collaborating with those counties to bring their services to this needy community, is the norm for this dedicated lady.

Stop by the Center and meet Martha. Her smile will welcome you!



**Cuyama Valley
Family Resource
Center**
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93453
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Special points of interest:

- ☉ The Coordinator
- ☉ Advisory Council
- ☉ Friday Night Out
- ☉ Upcoming Events

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A Sparkling 4th of July...

The happening place this 4th of July was the community park in Cuyama. Food, games and fun were the highlights of the day, and a parade!

Carne asada tacos, tamales, bar-b-que and various desserts were enjoyed by all. Tables were set up for the sale of a variety of items including antiques.

Events included a watermelon-eating contest, dunk tank, face-painting and sack race.

The CVFRC Parent's Advisory Council held a fundraiser by providing raffle prizes—toys for the kids and household items for the adults.



Community Photo Album



Arts & crafts at the FRC



Bear-y friendly



Kids at the FRC

Editorial by Katharina Zulliger

Family Support is one of the Focus Areas of the KIDS Network Strategic Plan for 2005-2008, and we are excited to be contributing in a direct way to supporting the development of family support services in the Cuyama Valley. While setting up operations in a remote area like Cuyama has at times presented interesting challenges for the KIDS Network staff and DSS support, it has at the same time been a wonderful opportunity for us to meet and collaborate with dedicated and kind-hearted people, parents and professionals, locals and people traveling from far away to bring support to the community. Finally, it has been a real pleasure to add the coordinator, Martha Yopez, to our staff and get a first hand glimpse of her daily dedication, tireless hard work and willingness to go out of her way to help families in need.

Martha was pleasantly surprised when presented with a Certificate of Appreciation by the women at the Mothers' Day Luncheon. The potluck event was organized by the moms who use the services available at the FRC. A well-deserved recognition from the people Martha serves.

Awesome!



Summer's here! What's a teen to do?



The CVFRC is collaborating with Marian Medical Center (Sandy Underwood) and the Cuyama Recreation District (Dorothy Batiste) to provide "Friday Night Out" for teenagers (ages 13–17). Twice a month beginning June 15, 2007 from 5pm to 8pm teens view a movie of their choice, learn how to read a recipe and prepare a healthy snack. Items needed for the snack preparation are being provided by Marian Medical Center.



The children of the Cuyama Valley gave Sister Mary and Sister Lucinda a going-away party at the church hall on July 20th in appreciation for all their years of commitment and dedicated service to the families and children of this community.

Sisters Mary and Lucinda are loved and respected by all, and will be missed.

We wish them well as they begin the next chapter of their lives.

Parent's Advisory Council

The Cuyama Valley Family Resource Center Parent's Advisory Council (PAC) meets once a month at the Center from 5pm to 7pm. Since June the meetings have included one-hour training sessions on the roles and responsibilities of an advisory council. Members are learning to work together for a common purpose; how to be an effective advocate for the FRC; how to be an effective parent in Cuyama; and to determine what services are needed in their community.

The current PAC officers, and members interested in becoming, or re-

maining, officers are required to attend all classes.

The sessions are facilitated by Martha and Katharina Zulliger, the FRC's DSS Supervisor, as well as expert consultants.



Sisters Mary & Lucinda

Dorothy Batiste, Cuyama Recreation District, was in need of volunteer adults to help supervise the children participating in the summer program at the recreation hall. Martha set up a meeting with Dorothy and some parents, and voila! volunteers were signed up. A good example of community spirit and collaboration.

Spotlight on the Family...by Martha Yopez

Maria (not real name) had a tooth that was giving her trouble, but she had a fear of dentists. I worked with her to take her children for dental care, which she did, but the dentist was not for her. As time went on her tooth worsened and broke off. Finally she agreed to let me make an appointment for her. But the only transportation available to her was the van that makes by-weekly trips to Santa Maria, and it did not get back to Cuyama before her kids got home from school. I offered to take her and bring her back in time and she accepted. After four trips to the dentist she is half way through her treatments. Today she is glad that I did not give up on her, and she loved being the first passenger in the Center's new car!

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EVENTS CALENDAR

>>> **Parents' Advisory Council:**

2nd Tues. of the mo. 5pm-7pm

>>> **Parent Support Group:**

8/13/07 10am-12pm

>>> **Friday Night Out:**

7/27/07

8/10/07

>>> **Schools Begin:**

August 20, 2007

>>> **Other Events:**

Family Fun Day*

(*date to be determined)

MISSION STATEMENT

To enhance the physical, mental and social well-being of all people in the Cuyama Valley; and to increase accessibility to resources for families in need.

OFFICE HOURS

Monday through Friday 8:00 am to 4:00 pm

Food Pantry: 1st and 4th Wednesdays

Mobile Pantry: 3rd Wednesday of the Month (at the Catholic Church parking lot)

Funding for the Cuyama Valley Family Resource Center is provided by Santa Barbara County Department of Social Services and First 5.



The Cuyama Valley FRC
is a member of the
First 5 Family Support Initiative.



Service Resources

Case Management

Cuyama Valley FRC

Food Distribution

Catholic Charities

Mobile Food Pantry

Food Bank of S. M.

Nutrition, Health & Fitness

Marian Medical Center

Medical Insurance Assistance

Cuyama Valley FRC

Thanksgiving Baskets (November)

Mobile Food Pantry

Food Bank of SM

Toys for Tots (December)

U. S. Marine Corp.

Adopt a Family (December)

All Saints by the Sea

Adopt a Child from Cuyama (December)

Marian Medical Center

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small office remained a priority. When the rental property at the school, which had been the original intended location when planning the transition, was not available, several community members stepped forward and suggested suitable alternatives that could serve as a new home for the FRC, while awaiting the construction of a planned community center supported by Supervisor Centeno. After a planning luncheon at the Buckhorn, the Christian Academy, which was at the time utilized only Tuesday and Thursday afternoons for the school-district's homework club, was selected as a suitable site that

could be utilized immediately without requiring costly renovations. In addition, the building owners had graciously agreed to provide the site rent-free in support of the community service the FRC was providing! The CVFRC moved in March 2007 and operations have been growing ever since.

We are looking forward to joining other County agencies at the future Community Center. Until then we have found a wonderful home thanks to the generous spirit of this small community.

Stop by anytime to visit our new office, or to take advantage of the services. Opening hours are Monday through Friday, 8-4 p.m.