County Celebrates Another Successful ‘Labor of Love’ Event

What started out 22 years ago as an event to educate mothers-to-be about avoiding alcohol and drugs during pregnancy is still going strong in Monterey County in 2014. The Labor of Love event was held earlier this month and brought so many attendees to the Salinas Community Center it was near capacity.

Event founder Michelle Fox, a Registered Nurse with the Monterey County Health Department’s Women, Infants and Children (WIC) Nutrition Program, says she never imagined the event would grow to this size, and is grateful to the team that works so well together to make it happen.

“This event is put together without a
single meeting,” says Fox. “From the Department of Social Services, David Maradei, Director of CAPC, is our event chair and does the finances, sponsorships and decorations; Joy Mendoza of WIC puts together the games and activities; Jeremie Niduaaza of WIC does the healthy snacks; the LVN Program at Hartnell College does the education tables, and I coordinate the agency education tables. All 35 of the participating agencies had a fun learning activity at their table to promote healthy babies, pregnancies and parenting.”

A total of 700 people attended the event this year, which is fondly described as the largest baby shower in the county; but it is a baby shower with a deeper purpose. Labor of Love has become a very successful primary prevention program aimed at pregnant or soon-to-be moms and parents of young children. While celebrating children and families, Labor of Love ‘delivers’ parenting, nutrition, child abuse prevention, medical care, health, substance abuse and SIDS information.

Attendees are treated to games, gifts and refreshments. First-time dads participated in the Dad’s Diaper Derby and the Feed the Big Baby Contest.

Both Fox and Maradei hope the event will continue to draw large crowds and bring a group of new parents each year. The event happens each September near Labor Day, which is no coincidence says Fox, who explains most births happen in September.

Performance Measures Process Offers Benefit for Treasurer-Tax Collector’s Office

Last week, Treasurer-Tax Collector Mary Zeeb shared with the Board of Supervisors her department’s work with the Performance Measures process, explaining that such measurements are nothing new to a department such as hers which is numbers driven; it has always used numbers and data to measure department’s
investment and revenue performance. What was new she says was that the process shed light on the department’s mission and values statements, which needed updating to reflect what was currently happening in the department.

A group of employees volunteered their time to retool these statements, working together to create a new vision for the department and even developed a logo which includes the department’s values. Zeeb thanked Joann Iwamoto, the CAO/Intergovernmental and Legislative Affairs Division staff member who is overseeing the Managing for Results Program, who worked extensively with employees as they re-crafted these documents.

The Treasurer Tax Collector’s Office has three divisions: Treasury, Property Tax and Revenue, and a goal for each division and the results were highlighted for the Board.

The Treasury Division invests and manages a portfolio in excess of $1 billion on behalf of the County, schools and special districts. The division priorities are safety of principal first, maintaining sufficient liquidity second and yield third. Output measures for this division were identified and focused on processing deposits and earnings. The goal is to exceed industry benchmark yields, which the department has done for the three years represented in the report.

The Property Tax Collection Services Division oversees the billing, collection, reporting, and accounting for all real and taxable property, including transient occupancy tax. For this division, output measures focused on the amounts collected with the goal to maintain collection rates above the state average, as these monies are a vital source of revenue to the schools, county, cities and special districts who receive them. The department is exceeding its targets on collections.

The Revenue Division collects criminal fines and fees for the Superior Court of California as well as payments for court-ordered services from departments such as Probation, Health, Public Defender and the Sheriff’s Office. Output measures focus on the amount collected and collection per revenue officer as well as the number of new and delinquent accounts being worked. The goal in this area is to increase the number of active payment plans available which increases the interaction with clients and probability of collecting monies. The result of this measure, which is in its first year, came close to hitting its target goal.

Another goal was to improve customer satisfaction. In a first year effort, the department measured the number of customers who rated provided service as ‘excellent’ and received a 96%.
Are You Ready? Better Build an Emergency Kit

Why not celebrate National Preparedness Month and make an emergency kit? The Office of Emergency Services (OES) says a little preparation can really pay off.

How to build a kit? It’s actually easy to get started.

First, take a few moments to think about what you do on a daily basis and the things you use each day. Then imagine a time when the only things you have are what you have with you or already assembled because you either had to evacuate to a community shelter or stay “sheltered in place” at home. Imagine stores are closed or don’t have what you use most often.

What would you need?

A disaster kit customized to your needs ensures you have what you need, when you need it.

Use the following list as a starting point for building your own kit. For more tips and ideas, check out OES on Twitter @MontereyCoOES, follow the hashtag #Buildakit, visit Ready.gov or check out the OES blog post.

Ideas for Disaster Supply Kit:

- Water: one gallon of water per person per day for drinking and sanitation
- Food: at least a three-day supply of non-perishable food (don’t forget the can opener)
- Flashlight(s)
- Battery-powered radio, extra batteries
- Blankets
- Cell phones and ways to charge (such as the car charger)
- Small hand tools (wrench/pliers)
- Maps
- Cash (When the power is out, ATMs and card machines do not work)
- First-aid supplies
- Toiletries
- Hand Sanitizer
- Change of clothes
- Pet supplies
- Important family documents and photos
- Paper and writing utensils
- Entertainment (books, games, toys, cards)