



Positive Press

The Official Newsletter of the Southern Colorado Health Network

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SANTA JEY, CWA, FRIENDS & FAMILY BRING JOY TO CLIENTS' KIDS ONCE AGAIN

The Southern Colorado Health Network Children's Holiday Gift Program has been a success story for SCHN for many years and this year was no exception thanks once again to the energy and effort of Jey Lawson and his power of persuasion.

This S-CAP/SCHN Children's Holiday Gift Program is a heartfelt tradition that has been ongoing and steadfast for more than 20 years. For almost all of this time, members of the Communication Workers of America (CWA) Local 7708, AFL-CIO, have played a substantial role in securing holiday gifts for the kids.

Several years ago, Jey, a CWA member got involved in the SCHN Children's Holiday Gift Program with his fellow union members and he soon became the lead organizer and coordinator of the local CWA group. In recent years, the CWA Local 7708 decreased in numbers, so Jey used his persuasive personality to also get family and friends involved in the SCHN holiday kids program.

So again this year, along with other union members, Jey (and SCHN) received help from Blush Dry Bar Salon employees (Brandi Martinez, owner), the Plains and Peak Telephone Pioneers of Colorado Springs (Nancy Imhoff and others), and additional friends and family members (mom, dad and grandmother).

The Telephone Pioneers also kept up their holiday tradition of donating personal care and hygiene products to the SCHN food pantry.

These generous and kind donations and gifts by Santa Jey (and his merry band of helpers) made the 2023 SCHN Children's Holiday Gift Program successful yet again. The SCHN staff and clients sincerely appreciate your charitable contributions and do not take this annual gift giving for granted.

Thank you very much.



Santa Jey and Nancy

A SEASONAL SONNET FOR SANTA JEY

At the beginning of December each year,
the distinctive holiday is getting so near.

And SCHN can expect Santa Jey at our back door,
delivering good tidings and gifts galore.

The presents Santa Jey brings are for SCHN kids,
and, figuratively, his generosity always blows off our lids.

Because SCHN kids are the recipients of these gifts,
the kindness of Santa Jey's good will, our spirit it lifts.

So, thank you, thank you, thank you Santa Jey,
for bringing the kids a more special holiday.

Yes Santa Jey, thank you, thank you, thank you,
your effort leads to some holiday dreams coming true.

Bravo, hurrah and hooray to you Santa Jey,
we send sincere appreciation your way.

2023 HIGHLIGHTED BY A 40-YEAR ANNIVERSARY EVENT AND OTHER ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The year 2023 was one of growth and accomplishments for the Colorado Health Network:



- 5,000+ people living with HIV received services.
- 300+ clients statewide maintained housing stability.
- 40,000+ client visits to CHN food pantries statewide.
- 1,000+ clients statewide received assistance in enrolling into medical insurance for 2024.
- “I am so grateful to have Tabitha as my insurance coordinator,” said one CHN client. “She always checked on me during times she didn’t have to and she listened to me with any concerns and helped me solve them.”
- Thousands of free HIV & STI tests provided statewide.
- Thousands of people served by statewide Syringe Access Programs.
- The Red Ribbon Ball, Bar Wars, Scotch Tasting, 40-Year Anniversary Gala, Red Ball, Ruby Nights, and the Festival For Life AIDS Walk and Run were all successful fundraising events for CHN.
- The year 2023 also marked the 40-year anniversary of the organization. CHN currently has four branches statewide: DCHN in Denver, SCHN in Colorado Springs and Pueblo, NCHN in Fort Collins and Greeley, and WCHN in Grand Junction. The Howard Dental Center merged with CHN in 2014.
- CHN’s current programs include case management, mental health and substance abuse counseling, food pantry access, insurance enrollment assistance, urgent financial and transportation assistance, housing resources, legal referrals, and a wide array of prevention outreach, testing and education programs.



National Women and Girls HIV/AIDS Awareness Day is March 10.

SCHN is planning an event on this day to commemorate and highlight Women and Girls HIV/AIDS Awareness.

Every year on March 10, communities come together to shed light on the impact of HIV/AIDS on women and girls in the United States.

Keep in touch with your case manager for additional information about the event and more details will follow in the next issue of the Positive Press.

This spring, another safe gathering in person in Colorado Springs is being planned for the celebration of the annual Red Ribbon Ball. The Red Ribbon Ball is a premier southern Colorado annual gala benefiting the Southern Colorado Health Network.

The Red Ribbon Ball highlights the advances in HIV prevention, treatment and care and also serves as a time to reflect on the incredible gains we have achieved together as a community in the fight against HIV/AIDS. It is also a time to remember those we have lost as well as a look into the future of how we can successfully adapt to the changing face of HIV in southern Colorado.

MORE DETAILS TO COME!



COLORADO SPRINGS HEY719 & ACCESS POINT UPDATES

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- On December 1, SCHN staffers Andrea and Lupe visited UCCS to participate in a dialogue around World AIDS Day. Prevention staff also offered free testing the following week in partnership with the UCCS Medical Clinic and the LGBTQ+ Resource Center.
- Prevention staff had the opportunity to tour the Prism Community Collective where staff will be offering testing and syringe access services once per week starting in February.
- Access Point Colorado Springs had 550 visits in December and 85 new participants. Access Point CS also held its first Participant Advisory Board meeting on December 1. Participants discussed ways to increase involvement, such as joining Access Point staff for Thursday outreach, adding new mobile distribution sites, and offering regular STI testing during programming.
- Prevention staff completed 55 HIV tests, 44 hepatitis C (HCV) tests, and 50 syphilis tests this month.
- Parker Wild officially started Prevention Services Coordinator duties on December 11.

COLORADO SPRINGS UTILITIES PROVIDES WINTER ENERGY-SAVING TIPS

Make sure your home stays cozy this winter with these low to no-cost tips provided by Colorado Springs Utilities:

- Change the direction of ceiling fans. During colder months, ceiling fans should rotate clockwise to pull warm air up and distribute it throughout a living space.
- Apply caulk or weatherstripping to seal leaks around windows and doors.
- Open curtains on south-facing windows during the day to allow sunlight to naturally heat the home and close them at night to reduce the chill from cold windows.
- Keep the fireplace damper closed unless a fire is burning.
- Check the furnace filter and change regularly. A clean filter allows the furnace to run more efficiently.
- Set the thermostat no higher than 68 degrees. At night or when away, set the thermostat to 60 degrees to save on energy costs.

Remember, you can still apply for the Low-income Energy Assistance Program (LEAP). It is a federally funded program that helps with home heating and water costs and runs through April 30.

WINTER DRIVING TIPS

Colorado's weather can change rapidly and the DRIVE SMART El Paso County Coalition would like to remind city and county residents to be prepared for tricky and sometimes dangerous winter driving conditions. Below are a few tips that will help you to be a safer driver during the winter.

- **Maintain traction:** Make sure you have good tire tread. Start and stop gradually to avoid losing traction. Accelerate slightly when approaching a hill, then maintain a steady speed going up and gear down on downgrades.
- **Skids:** If your vehicle begins to skid, remove your foot from the accelerator or brake, steer in the direction of the skid and once steady, turn the wheel straight and proceed.
- **Braking:** Be gentle with braking pressure, know what type of brake system you have—gently pump disc brakes to avoid locking the wheels. Locking your wheels will send your vehicle into a skid and avoid braking on a curve by driving through them at a safe, steady speed.

Additional advice from the experts: always wear your seat belt; don't drive too fast; use low-beam headlights in bad weather; leave extra space between you and the vehicle ahead of you; put together an emergency and first aid kit; and thoroughly check your vehicle before any road trip to make sure it is in safe operating condition.

For more information, visit www.cotrip.org or www.COEmergency.com



<https://www.facebook.com/SouthernCHN>

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YEARLY NATIONAL BLACK HIV/AIDS AWARENESS DAY IS FEBRUARY 7

Since 1999, National HIV/AIDS Awareness Day (NBHAAD) has been observed on Feb. 7 each year. This observance is a day to acknowledge how HIV disproportionately affects Black people.

Black communities have made great progress in reducing HIV. Yet racism, discrimination and mistrust in the health care system may affect whether Black people seek or receive HIV prevention services. These issues may also reduce the likelihood of engaging in HIV treatment and care. NBHAAD is an opportunity to increase HIV education, testing, community involvement, and treatment in Black communities.

The 2024 theme is “Engage, Educate, Empower: Uniting to End HIV/AIDS in Black Communities.”

Engage: Discussing ways to better involve the black community in HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment efforts. This can include outreach programs, community partnerships, and utilizing local leaders and influencers to promote HIV testing and destigmatize the conversation around HIV/AIDS.

Educate: Focusing on improving HIV/AIDS education among black youth and adults. This could cover the latest research, treatment options, understanding of PrEP and PEP medications, and debunking myths that contribute to stigma and discrimination.

Empower: Highlighting success stories and strategies that have effectively empowered black individuals living with HIV/AIDS. Empowerment can be through advocacy, policy change, access to care, and support systems.

Visit www.hiv.gov/events/awareness-days/black for additional information.

10 MILLION MEALS AND COUNTING FOR PROJECT ANGEL HEART

Project Angel Heart was founded in 1991 to address a major challenge for Coloradans who are ill: getting nutrition they need to get stronger, heal, and remain at home. That is why Project Angel Heart prepares and delivers medically tailored meals to people living with severe illness each week.

In December 2023, Project Angel Heart prepared and delivered its 10-millionth meal since inception. Congratulations to Project Angel Heart for this incredible accomplishment.

Many SCHN clients receive meals from Project Angel Heart. If you want to see if you qualify for Project Angel Heart meals, contact your case manager for help with the application process.



Access Point Pueblo

Free, sterile supplies available for those who need them.

Tuesday & Thursday,
10:00am-12:00pm
1:30pm-4:00pm



Sign Up for Our E-Newsletter!

Are you interested in receiving the Positive Press through e-mail? If so, please contact your Case Manager to be added to our e-mail list! You'll get the newest Positive Press at the moment its published!



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