

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

Issue 38 • Fall 2023



Pillar of Prevention Award

Alma Ixta, Community Services Coordinator



Alma Ixta receiving the **Pillar of Prevention Award** from Dan Hicks, Prevention Services Manager. This is in recognition of the extraordinary work that Alma Ixta has performed as the Community Services Coordinator for Prevention Services, serving the community with passion and commitment to underserved communities in Ventura County since January 2014.



Connecting with the Community









By Alma Ixta and Erika Fernandez, Community Services Coordinators

Community outreach involves being in the community and educating people about the negative effects of alcohol and drug use. Informing families about the risks of marijuana, vaping, opioids, fentanyl, meth, and alcohol helps to prevent and reduce alcohol and drug-related issues across Ventura County. We strive to develop relationships with partner organizations and members in the community for collaboration and support regarding substance use prevention.

During the past few months, we attended and participated in many outreach events, meetings and offered presentations. We gave presentations on [**What You Need to Know about Fentanyl & Opioids and Vaping: What Parents Need to Know**](#). Here are some of the summer highlights:

Words from Alma:

This quarter started with just a few community events in July. It started with the **Feria Campesina** where hundreds of people came for back-to-school backpacks, school supplies and food baskets. Many members from the Mixteco community were in attendance taking advantage of all the resources too. We know that their very hard labor leaves these agriculture workers in pain and sometimes it is easier to get pain medication in the street or from people in the community, so it was very important for us to be at this event to bring awareness about the dangers around fentanyl and fake pills. The information was well received, and community members were glad we were there with this valuable information. I also attended the **Coffee Bean & Tea Leaf 1st Annual Employee Wellness Fair, Adelante Conejo Comunidad Resource Fair, Swapmeet Justice Resource Fair** and monthly **Circle of Care** meetings.

August was a little busier with several outreach events and community presentation requests. It's what I love to do so I'm grateful that I was so busy in August. We started the month out by attending the **Annual Night Out at Del Sol Park** in collaboration with the city of Oxnard and Oxnard Police Department. It was well attended by community members as well as community organizations providing help and resources to the community. We also attended **Project Access Community Resource Fair** and **Westminster Free Clinic's Back to School** events where they gave out hundreds of back packs, food bags, clothing, and free medical services to the communities of Thousand Oaks and Oxnard. Both events were very well attended by children and families that were able to pick out a backpack from their big selection. We also attended the **Annual Oxnard Revival Church Community**

Resource Fair, where hundreds of people come for many resources, food, and clothing. We were also invited to give eight presentations for **Many Mansions** at their different properties in the county of Ventura. We attended the **Circle of Care** and **Oxnard Police Department** outreach planning meetings. We ended the month with **Celebration Nation Health Fair**, **Adelante Conejo Comunidad Resource Fair** and **Swapmeet Justice**.

I ended the quarter with an even busier month in September. I covered six **Back-to-School Nights** throughout the county, including **Frank Middle School**, **Oceanview Jr. High**, **Kamala School**, **Sunkist School**, **Fred Williams School** and **Hueneme Elementary**. I also attended the **Mexican Consulate's Jornada Sabatina** where there was much interest in fentanyl education and resources. I attended the **Childhood Matters Resource Fair at Oxnard College Park** with many activities and resources for children and agriculture worker families. I also started going to **Piru's San Salvador Food Share** event where families were happy to see we were there with our information and resources.

I was also able to participate in the **EDD Feria Campesina** where hundreds of participants came through our table for information. It still amazes me how parents' faces still light up when they are learning about all the different substances that their kids are exposed to in their environments. They want to take all the information to share with other family members.

We ended the month with **Adelante Comunidad Conejo** and the **VCBH COAST Facing Down Fentanyl** event. I was very happy to see Norma Perez-Sanford from **Fillmore Unified School District** bring a bus full of parents from Fillmore. I've always admired Norma's hard work and commitment to our Fillmore community. And if you don't know who Norma is, you should find time to meet her and pick her brain. She's an unbelievable human being. You can find her interview on our website from a few years back. I was scheduled to be at the **Viva Piru Heritage Festival** on September 30th, but they canceled it at the last minute due to rain.

It's been great being so busy out in the community and talking to parents at the different schools and community events. Being face to face with people in the community is what I enjoy most.

Words from Erika:

I attended the **Nyeland Acres Bike Rodeo** hosted by the organization Nyeland Promise. This is an organization in Oxnard that provides the residents of Nyeland Acres with support, resources, advocacy, encouragement, services, and basic needs to transform their lives and families. They hosted an event for the community, Nyeland Acres Bike Rodeo, to teach the community about bicycle safety. This event was free to the community, and they offered a bike safety course, free helmets, safety vest, snacks, and activity books, and they had resource and educational booths. I attended this event and had a table with our educational materials on substance use prevention and treatment

resources available to the community. About 100 attendees were at this event and many stopped by our table to get information on vaping, marijuana, fentanyl, medication safety, and overdose prevention.

Another great outreach opportunity we had was attending the **9th Annual Community Resources Fair**. This event is hosted by **Revive Community Church**. This event was created out of a vision to serve the community of El Rio and the members of Revive Church. Their purpose is to offer space for valuable health, finance, educational, and career resources to be shared in an environment of unity, hope, and positivity. The event was a great success, there were close to 1,500 people that attended the event. We had the opportunity to talk to a lot of community members and share the prevention education we have on opioids, fentanyl, vaping, and marijuana use. We also had overdose kits available for anyone that qualified and needed it.

Another community organization collaboration we had was with **Many Mansions**. They are a non-profit organization that provides well-managed, service-enriched, affordable housing to low-income residents of Southern California. Their residents include families of very low-income, seniors, veterans, disabled individuals, and those who were homeless. Many Mansion's mission is to provide homes and inspire hope through quality housing, services, and education. Alma Ixta and I gave a series of presentations for all their properties in Ventura County, including Oxnard, Port Hueneme Thousand Oaks properties. We gave presentations about opioids, fentanyl, and overdose prevention education and shared our resources. It was great seeing everyone in the community!



Protecting Our Youth: Cannabis Regulation in Ventura County

PROTECTING OUR YOUTH

Cannabis Regulation in Ventura County

TREND REPORT • SEPTEMBER 2023



VENTURA COUNTY
BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

Learn about the public health impacts of cannabis and what you can do to make a difference.

Youth and young adults have easy access to marijuana in more potent forms and in a growing number of community settings, despite potential health and safety harms. Our goal is to protect developing teen brains by limiting access.

Learn more:

www.VenturaCountyLimits.org/cannabis

www.VenturaCountyLimits.org/marihuana



Campaign Spotlight: Speak Up on Meth



Alza la voz sobre la metanfetamina



Meth with fentanyl is everywhere. So if the brain damage isn't enough, the fentanyl can kill you.

Learn more:

www.FentanylVenturaCounty.org

www.TalkingAboutMeth.org



**Community Conversations:
Video Podcast Series with Alma & Erika**

New Podcast Series



*Community
Conversations*

Nueva Serie de Podcast



Acompáñame

*Plática
con Café*

Our community is facing ever-shifting drug trends that may harm those we care about. We sit down to review commonly asked questions and how best we can respond as a community. Alma and Erika discuss the risks and harms of fentanyl and fake pills in our community. Topics include: recognizing an overdose; how to respond to an overdose, including the use of naloxone; and how to stay safe from fentanyl and fake pills. See the conversations below and stay informed! Our next podcast series in the fall will focus on marijuana and vaping risks to youth. Stay tuned!

Click below to view featured clips or for the full version.

English

- [Community Conversations - Fentanyl and Fake Pills](#)
- [Short clip: Recognize the Signs](#)



Spanish

- [Plática con café - Fentanilo y Opioides](#)
- [Video corto: Cómo mantenerse informados](#)



National Rx Take Back Day is October 28



Ventura County is committed to preventing prescription drug misuse and abuse. One of the ways the county works to address the issue locally is by reducing access, especially to teens. The Ventura County Sheriff's Office in collaboration with Ventura County Behavioral Health established a countywide Rx disposal program that allows residents to safely dispose of

unused, unwanted, or expired Rx medication via secure, confidential disposal bins. Over the last several years, this has expanded to other jurisdictions and retail pharmacies.

The **DEA's Take Back Day** provides an opportunity to prevent drug addiction and overdose deaths. It encourages people to dispose of prescription drugs while also educating the public about the potential for abuse of medications.

What You Can Do

- Commit to safely disposing of your prescription drugs
- Get the facts on Rx & OTC drug abuse
- Dispel the myth that Rx drugs are safe to abuse
- Know the signs and symptoms of drug use
- Monitor and secure all medications

Learn more:

[National Rx Take Back Day is October 28](#)
[Medication Disposal Drop-Off Locations](#)

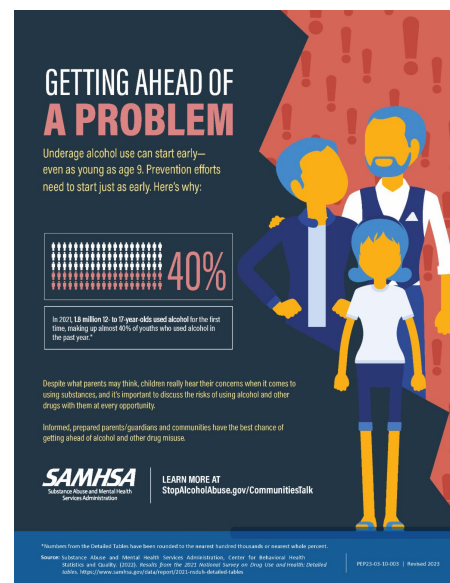


Partner News & Resources

Underage Alcohol Use

This data visualization from SAMHSA illustrates the drinking habits of adolescents to inform parents/guardians and communities.

Getting Ahead of a Problem - Underage alcohol use can start early— even as young as age 9. Prevention efforts need to start just as early. Here's why: 40% In 2021, 1.8 million 12- to 17-year-olds used alcohol for the first time, making up almost 40% of youths who used alcohol in the past year.



Despite what parents may think, children really hear their concerns when it comes to using substances, and it's important to discuss the risks of using alcohol and other drugs with them at every opportunity. Informed, prepared parents/guardians and communities have the best chance of getting ahead of alcohol and other drug misuse.

Learn more:

[Getting Ahead of a Problem](#)
www.samhsa.gov

Can fentanyl be absorbed through your skin?, UC Davis Health, October 18, 2022

[English](#)

[Spanish](#)



Calendar

Community Meetings

- **Circle of Care Monthly Meeting**
1st Wednesday of every month at 1:00 PM
Contact: mzumaya@myonestep.org
 - **Oxnard Police Department Outreach Coordinator Meeting**
1st Wednesday of every month at 10:30 AM
Contact: teresa.telles@oxnardpd.org
 - **Santa Paula Social Services Coalition Meeting**
3rd Thursday of every month at 2:00 PM
Contact: SPSocialServiceCoalition@gmail.com
 - **Behavioral Health Advisory Board (BHAB) Prevention Committee Meeting**
4th Tuesday at 3:15 PM. These meetings are open to the public.
Contact: [BHAB Prevention Committee](#)
-



Stay Informed



Stay in touch with our prevention efforts on our websites.

Websites

- [Ventura County Limits](#)
- [Ventura County Responds](#)
- [COAST Ventura County](#)
- [Social Determinants of Health](#)
- [Vaping FactCheck Ventura County](#)
- [Marijuana FactCheck](#)

Campaigns

- [Fentanyl is Forever Campaign](#)
- [Meth - Don't Buy the Lie Campaign](#)
- [Just Not Worth It Campaign](#)



Contact Us



Interested in presentations or publications to share with your communities? Contact Us!

Community Services Coordinators:

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STAY CONNECTED



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