

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

June 17, 2021

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A Hero Called Dad

Alameda County Social Services Agency Celebrates Father's Day as State Reopens

Hayward, CA.— "I have a hero; I call him Dad."

It's not clear who first said that, but the fathers who turned out for the Alameda County Social Services Agency's "A Father is...." Father's Day Giveaway Event were looking back on a year where they had to be heroes to guide their families through the COVID-19 disaster and into the newly reopening world.

Every Dad deserves a gift he can really use on Father's Day, and for the fifth consecutive year that is just what they received starting June 15 at four Alameda County Social Services Agency (ACSSA) locations: the Eden Area Multi-Service Center in Hayward, and the Eastmont, Enterprise, and North Oakland Self-Sufficiency Centers in Oakland. For the guests of honor—parents who are recipients of public assistance, many accompanied by their children—the event was more than a chance to shop for gifts they can use. It was a chance to reflect on how far they have come, and their hopes for the future.

"Father's Day 2021 comes during the historic week of reopening here in California," said Kevin Bremond, co-founder of the Alameda County Fathers Corps (ACFC). ACFC is a collaborative effort of First 5 Alameda County, Alameda County's Health Care Services Agency, and ACSSA that was formed to advocate for father-friendly services and support fathers with being fully engaged with their children and communities. He added, "This event offers fathers from some of our most vulnerable and disadvantaged communities the practical necessities needed to put their best foot forward with their families and in their communities. A necktie or grooming kit can be the difference that builds a dad's confidence that helps him land a job."

One father with his two sons by his side was brought to tears recalling how he lost his job as a painter and his home due to the COVID-19 disaster and has been experiencing housing insecurity for some time now. He said the event at ACSSA not only connected him with some necessities but also programs and services that will help them find permanent housing. Meanwhile, they planned to celebrate Father's Day by going swimming. The sons said they loved being with their dad because, "He's nice, and he's understanding."

This year, due to the COVID-19 emergency, gift tables were set up and festively decorated outside and staffed by SSA personnel. Donated shoes and clothes were offered as well, creating a golden opportunity to pull together a confident new look for a job interview.

“This event is one of many that ACSSA staff coordinates throughout the year to give back to our clients. This is in addition to what they do in the normal course of their work to support and strengthen our community. This event happens to focus on fathers,” said Lori Cox, Director of the ACSSA. “So much of our efforts in Social Services are focused on single mothers, and that’s essential. At the same time, we have long recognized the vital role of fathers and their contributions to their families. Their significance is often marginalized or overlooked completely; we want to change that paradigm.”

Enthusiasm for the Father’s Day event has spread to other County departments. “This year was extra special thanks to the generosity not only of ACSSA staff, but staff in the Auditor-Controller Agency and the Library and Fire Departments who made generous donations to assist in the recognition effort,” according to Andrea Ford, Assistant Agency Director for ACSSA’s Department of Workforce and Benefits Administration. “All of the items are donated by County staff. Any used items are in excellent condition. What staff don’t have in their closets, they purchase.”

One visitor chose a smart new tie and a shaving kit. He remarked, “With our state officially reopening this week, these will help me start each day with a little more confidence, and to set that example for my children as they return to school, playing sports, and spending time with each other outside our home.”

If you would like to donate a new or gently used gift to a deserving father next year, contact Sylvia Soublet, Director, ACSSA’s Office of Public Affairs and Community Relations at 510-271-9100, or email ssoublet@acgov.org



List of photos on next page.

List of Photos (Photos are attached in a zip folder as jpeg files; Video link is below):

Alameda County Social Services Agency celebrates some of its greatest heroes: fathers

1. Father's Day gifts aren't complete without a card. This father and his sons took the Alameda County Social Services Agency's message of appreciation to heart. We also have [video of this family \(no sound\) enjoying the event.](#)



2. One dad finds his uniform at the Alameda County Social Services Agency's Father's Day event.



3. Father's Day event helps Alameda County's dads put their best foot forward in a reopening world.

