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Albert Meraz
President, SF HAAC

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

SF HAAC Members,

It is my pleasure to welcome you to the special edition of the *¡Si Se Puede!* Newsletter. I hope everyone is enjoying the fall season and that you have an opportunity to spend some quality time with your family and friends. As you might agree, this year has gone by too fast. This year, your elected SF HAAC Executive Council (EC) had the distinct pleasure of hosting the 2015 SF HAAC Regional Leadership Training (RLT) and Gala

events that took place on September 10th and 11th in Garden Grove, CA. Approximately eight years have passed since we last hosted an event of this size. In attendance were over 300 hundred employees who were looking to enhance their personal development, with representation from all over the SF Region and many different components.

First and foremost, I would like to recognize the significant work, dedication and leadership demonstrated by all those who contributed in the planning and organization of the RLT and Gala events, including EC members and volunteers. Additionally, we received a significant amount of support from both regional and national executives. It was truly the efforts of all that made these events a success. Thank you.

Finally, a special ‘Thank You’ goes to everyone who attended these phenomenal events. It is my sincere hope that these events helped you in your quest for personal development and that this is just the beginning of your career aspirations. We hope you enjoy this special edition newsletter, which illustrates the experiences of a few of those in attendance. On behalf of the EC, we hope you have a wonderful holiday season and we hope to see each of you at the next SF HAAC event!

¡Si Se Puede!

Best wishes,

Albert Meraz

SF HAAC President

SF HAAC RLT & Gala **September 10 & 11, 2015** **Garden Grove, CA** By: Jason Welsh, Executive Vice President

On behalf of the SF-HAAC Executive Council, I would like to thank all of you who attended this year's Regional Leadership Training (RLT) on September 10th and 11th. We understand how valuable your time and money are so we hope that you found this conference to be a worthwhile investment in your career.

Additionally, I would like to thank the SF-HAAC Executive Council and the countless volunteers who helped plan, organize and coordinate all the behind-the-scenes work that made this

conference an overwhelming success.

And finally, I would like to thank the numerous executives and leaders who supported us in this endeavor and volunteered their time to help develop, mentor and encourage the future leaders of this agency. Thank you.

Congratulations to our SF HAAC Awards recipients:

2015 SF HAAC Leadership Award –

Mr. Rafael Moya

2015 SF HAAC Outstanding Mentor –

Mr. Edgar Padilla

2015 SF HAAC Community Service Award –

Mrs. Angelica Castillo

2015 SF HAAC Outstanding Mentee –

Mrs. Monica Martinez

2015 SF HAAC Executive Council Leadership Award –

Mr. Alfredo (Al) Ballon

2015 SF HAAC Presidential Honor Award –

Mr. Jose G. Velasco

2015 SF HAAC Presidential Honor Award –

Mr. Javier Rodriguez

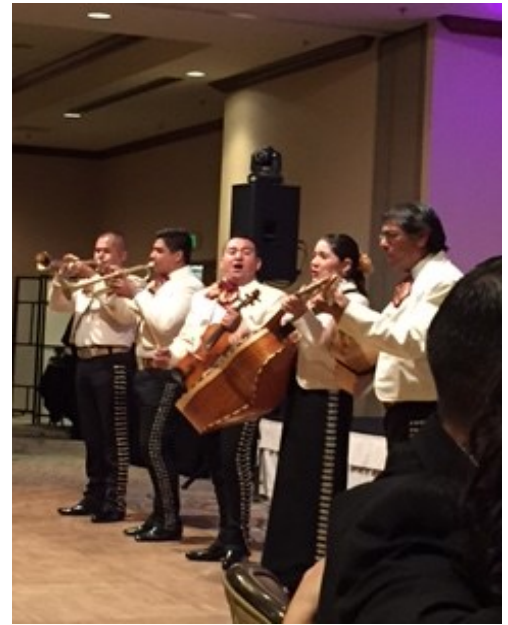
2015 SF HAAC \$500 Scholarship Winner –

Ms. Tiffany Simmons



2015 SF HAAC Executive Council

SF-HAAC Gala





Phenomenal Event

By: Roxanna Nolan, CR, Palm Springs, CA

What an amazing training and Gala! I am so glad I decided to attend the SF HAAC Regional Leadership Training (RLT) and Gala. I could not believe how many executive members came to the training to give us personal advice and to inform us of current agency events. SF HAAC president, Albert Meraz, welcomed, motivated and encouraged us all to continue to “work hard and be the best at what we do.”

Our Regional Commissioner, Grace Kim provided the opening statements. I learned so much from so many successful people, had the opportunity to network with many members of management, and met so many remarkable colleagues. During the RLT, we

were encouraged to continue learning. For example, we can enhance our knowledge and foundation by pursuing a degree, attending different public speaking courses like Toastmasters and so much more.

I learned more about the LDP, RIX program, TSR sharing, NLDP, WNDP, ROX, IDP, and details. I attended two workshops during the RLT. The first workshop, lead by Eric Bencomo and Ana Chavez, informed us about what management looks for in an employee. They inspired us to further our education and keep a healthy leave balance. They said, “do your job well, dress for success, be the solution to someone’s problem, do more than your fair share, learn to take risks, collaborate, attend conferences and training events.”

I attended another workshop led by Juan García, from the Feather River office. He taught us about self-awareness, having a clear perception of your personality, including

strengths, weaknesses, thoughts, beliefs, motivation, and emotions.

Finally, to end the RLT we had a fantastic Gala! It was truly an unforgettable evening! That is the way Hispanics/Latinos celebrate a successful event by having a Mariachi dinner, folkloric dancers and lots of dancing by everyone. It was a delight to see everyone dressed up in beautiful gowns and clean-cut suits; we all had a magnificent time. I want to give a special thank you to everyone that organized this phenomenal event and I look forward to my turn to help organize the next SF HAAC event.



Claudia Lamp, Roxanna Nolan and Ana Ramos

Leadership

By: Araseli Ramos
OS, Phoenix DT, AZ



The SF HAAC Regional Leadership Training (RLT) seminar was an incredible learning and leader-

ship experience. I really enjoyed the executives coming together to share their compelling stories in leadership and personal development. It was inspiring, energizing and motivating to continue to be successful in my role with the Agency. I attended two of the three workshops offered; *Get up and Go!! 24 Rules for Greater Career Success*, and *The Art of Interviewing*. The information was useful and to

the point, which I appreciated.

The RLT was an amazing, transforming experience. I am sure the wisdom you learned at the RLT can take you to new heights, as I am sure it will take me! The RLT was a great investment in my career and my personal life. Each time I attend a HAAC seminar, I come back with a take away that I incorporate into my daily life.

Butterflies

By: Katalin Ribeiro,
CR, Sonora, CA

It was a long drive to the two-day Regional Leadership Training and gala event for my coworker and me. During that six hour drive to Garden Grove/Anaheim, I went through a rollercoaster of emotions: fatigue, doubt, excitement and fear, just to name a few. As we pulled up to the conference site, I felt butterflies quickly beginning to flap their wings deep in the pit of my stomach. No doubt, I was nervous. We quickly found a seat, but the butterflies would not disperse. When I took a moment and looked around, I realized I was surrounded by a sea of unfamiliar faces. Although I didn't recognize anyone, they looked just like me. They were intrigued, motivated, and ready to learn. At that moment, the butterflies began to settle. My nerves began to calm.

Then the epiphany hit, —this event was worth the drive, the butterflies, and the nerves. It was worth it all. Not

only did I hear phenomenal speakers so motivating and inspiring, but I had the opportunity to meet those speakers, DMs, CRs, TSC and PC employees. Folks, like me, who were ready to impact their career. We shared stories and knowledge, experiences and memories. And, the funny thing is, what I first thought was a sea of unfamiliar faces were, in fact, multiple colleagues I had met at other conferences and events. That's the bonus of these events —you may meet someone who is a buddy for the day or a friend for life. Either way, you'll learn something from them and it will be invigorating to see them again at the next event.

So to you, yes you! The one who took the time to read my words and learn more about my experience at the conference. I would highly recommend this training conference to you and anyone else interested in learning something new, meeting new people, or willing to advance their

career. As I learned at this year's Regional Leadership Training conference, advancement doesn't always mean moving up but can also mean moving to the side. So my word of advice to you would be to take the step; as long as you're not taking a step back, you are, in some way, moving forward. And don't worry about the butterflies, they'll eventually fly away.



Dynamic

By: Marina Aguilera,
TSR, Los Angeles, CA



Hello HAAC family! I have been a HAAC member for over 5 years now. I have attended many different workshops, volunteered

my services, and learned something valuable from every HAAC event. On September 10th, I attended my first two-day HAAC Regional Leadership Training and Gala event in Anaheim, CA. This event was especially fulfilling for me.

I was able to meet and interact with individuals from

different Field Offices and establish new friendships. Being able to network with different people enabled me to gain valuable information as it relates to my future with the agency.

I found all the speakers and presenters to be informative and inspiring; The panel of women participating in the Leadership Development Program (LDP) was of particular importance to me. They talked about career opportunities and explained how they balance being a career women along with their personal lives. I thought this was very helpful as I am a working wife and mother trying to advance in my career. I also enjoyed listening to Dr. Betances. His

dynamic and impassioned presentation energized the entire audience. Dr. Betances emphasized the importance of reading, which is a belief of mine as well.

Lastly, I finally got to meet my fantastic HAAC mentor in person after three years. She gave me the opportunity to get involved and volunteer with the Gala and I loved it. I helped set up the tables and worked on flower arrangements. During the Gala, I was able to talk to different people while enjoying the music, comedian, Folklorico, and Bolivian dancers.

For me, it was a successful event and I fully recommend that everyone participate in future events.

Leadership

By: Servando Chavez
OS, Victorville, CA

What a refreshing, authentic, joyful, and inspiring seminar. Everyone who attended was delighted to have participated in such an engaging training. The Regional Leadership Training was an amazing two-day seminar.

On the first day of the training, Martin White, Glen Banks, Bill Shie and Steve Breen answered questions from the audience and provided some insight on the direction the agency is taking in the future. It's amazing how big the agency is and how many components make it one of the most successful government entities. When Bill Zielinski said, "these conferences are personal" his words hit home. Although the agency has many

parts that contribute to meeting its mission, these personal conferences help tie all the components together and give perspective of how important each person is to the agency's success.

We finished the day with a presentation from Hy Hinojosa and Rafael Moya on "Authentic Leadership". Authentic leadership is an approach to leadership that emphasizes building the leader's legitimacy through honest relationships with followers that value their input and are built on an ethical foundation. Generally, authentic leaders are positive people with truthful self-concepts who promote openness.

On the second day we received *The Baker's Dozen For Successful Leadership* presented by Dr. Reginald Wells. This was followed by

the Leadership Development Program Panel, which provided valuable information and advice. The keynote speaker was Dr. Samuel Betances. He is a great motivator and brought everyone to their feet. I loved his message: "It matters less where we are from; what really matters is where we are going. Accept our diversity. Embrace it. Make it work for you. Harness the rainbow."

It was an amazing experience. I encourage everyone to attend a conference. They are highly motivating, informative and offer the opportunity to expand your network. *Muchas Gracias HAAC!*



Transformational

By: Kelly Hanzy
BA, Oakland, CA



The 2015 San Francisco Hispanic Affairs Advisory Council Regional Leadership Training, is my second regional training and my first time attending training from HAAC. As expected, there were several positive and memorable attributes from the training.

Both external and internal guest speakers of the agency were captivating and encouraging. The selected guest speakers were incredibly encouraging and displayed a level of transparency and vulnerability that only reinforced the theme of the training, "Transformation Leadership." In the presentation, "Authentic Leadership" both Hy Hinojosa and Rafael, not only shared their personal stories but also shared the importance of always remaining true to yourself and the importance of keeping your values intact, such as having integrity. All presenters conveyed true leadership. True leaders are not foreign to the

idea of sharing humble beginnings, neither in life nor of their shortcomings or weakness. To me true leadership is one that acknowledges all and works to improve all. Dr. Betances shared his humble beginnings and that left me with feelings of empowerment and revitalized me to be the best I can be. Dr. Betances left an incredible indentation on my psyche that, if you do not let your circumstance discourage you or allow yourself to be complacent in your situation, you can accomplish anything!

I appreciated the encouraged interaction from the audience. The opportunity to hear from those in the audience, whether it was their participation and response of a given task or an expressed concern, I felt an authentic connection that spoke volumes and was a true embodiment of "authentic leadership." The audience was able to ask direct questions and receive advice from executives and those over their district. I felt the audience had a platform to express their ideals of what authentic leadership meant to them. I found this portion of the training crucial because the successes of agency goals are based on its ability to work as a whole and be in unison. It is important that we work together in order to provide efficient, high-quality public service.

One of the workshops I selected allowed me the opportunity to meet with a group of

employees from various districts and speak directly with Hy Hinojosa and Anna Crane. This opportunity allowed me to ask questions specific towards selecting a mentor and finding the best fit. I found this information helpful because, while we want to improve our skills and receive guidance from someone, it is also important ask questions to ensure the mentor is a good fit for you. As a person in search for a mentor, we need to do a little homework about our desired mentor. Do they have any experience in your area of interest? Do they have the availability to help guide you as a mentor? These were all important questions that both Hy and Anna had us consider.

Overall, the conference was great! There is no doubt in my mind I will attend the next Regional Leadership Training by the Hispanic Affairs Advisory Council.

Worthwhile

By: Nandhu Reddy
SR, Santa Barbara, CA

This year's two-day HAAC Conference was, without a doubt, one of the most worthwhile conferences I have attended! Having been with the agency for considerably less time than the average conference attendee, it was especially nice to make meaningful connections with several colleagues from all around – other FOs, TSCs, PC, and even the RO. After the two days, having been exposed to so many colleagues, our extremely large agency suddenly became much smaller. I left the conference with a broader network of valued friends.

For me, the following were some of the most significant highlights from the conference. (There were many more than just these!)

1. The “Speed mentoring” workshop, in which we were afforded extensive 1-on-1 conversations with high-level leaders from around our region. From this, I received invaluable advice and a clearer picture of the potential that so many of us have in this agency.

2. Getting a broader exposure into our agency's behind-the-scenes strategic planning, and what goes into some of the large-scale decisions that are made. For instance, the intricate and complex systems and the extreme

lengths that our trusted technologists have gone to make sure both the public – and employees – are safe! It was particularly interesting to hear of the large influence that the private sector has in making us as secure as possible.

3. Being captivated by the world-renowned keynote speaker Dr. Samuel Betances. I cannot remember the last time I was in a hall with several hundred people and a glowing aura swept throughout the entire hall, from the speaker's encouragements. The way he enthusiastically shouted when he spoke on topics like diversity and resilience, it was like being in a thunderstorm, ... except that you didn't want the thunder to end. I seriously hope he comes back in the future!



Santa Barbara District Staff

Transformational experience, WOW!

By: Chantage Ortega
CR, Merced, CA

I am normally someone who avoids venturing out of my comfort zone at all costs, let alone aspire to do so much more within myself. This all changed on September 10, 2015, in Anaheim, California. I attended the 2015 SF-HAAC Regional Leadership conference. I can honestly say I am more excited to make a change and become the best version of myself.

It has been an honor to serve this Agency for the past six years. This was my first time attending developmental training outside of the required and standard work training. At first, I was somewhat intimidated with the unfamiliar setting including a room full of executives. However, the SF HAAC Leadership team constructed such a warm and welcoming environment, I soon felt at ease. Shortly thereafter, the initial intimidation factor disseminated, I was encouraged to take the necessary steps to take my personal and professional development to places I never dreamed of before.

The testimonies shared by all the presenters provided great insight into the possibilities within the agency. They en-

couraged ownership of my own personal and professional development. *“Never stop learning”* is the professional mantra I am now adopting as a result.

I am now ready to break out of my shell and throw caution to the wind. I intend to apply in 2016 for the Central Office Job Experience Leadership Development Program and travel to Baltimore Maryland for a 30-day detail for starters. *“Whatever the mind can conceive and bring itself to believe, it can achieve.”* —Napoleon Hill. I take great comfort knowing so many individuals within this great agency that are so willing to mentor, guide and educate others. Although, the possibilities seem endless to me now, I take away two key themes from this amazing encounter. One: I am not alone on this upcoming journey. Two: There are many resources available within the agency and the HAAC program.

I cannot express enough appreciation to HAAC and to all the executives for taking time out of their busy schedules to participate in this event as well as for all they do to invest in our futures and the future of this great Agency. I look forward to participating in future personal/professional

development opportunities and, perhaps one-day, serve as a member of this Agency’s leadership team.

¡Si Se Puede!



Building on Baker's Dozen

By: Jennifer S. Hernandez
OS, Hemet, CA

This year's Regional Leadership Training was an inspiration to those desiring personal and professional development that is relevant, passionate and ever-growing through continued education. The training was a demonstration in transformational leadership with golden nuggets of wisdom being imparted to those in attendance from various components and regions within the agency. This was an event not to be missed.

No matter how technically savvy you may prove to be, there are tools for your growth and development that prove vital and relevant in today's ev-

er changing society. Dr. Wells so eloquently shared his *Baker's Dozen* with us. Getting back to the basics of how Walking the Talk, Balance and Integrity, just to name a few, are to be prevalent in your actions and conduct. He shared his philosophy on growth, giving back through mentoring and how continued learning and development are vital.

Equally vital to influential and transformational leadership is to lead with passion that is not clouded with emotion. Our zeal and drive can be great motivators when properly channeled and not overshadowed by emotion. Passion, along with good decision making skills, can prove to be powerful when accom-

panied by other leadership skills when serving our public, our employees and each other.

Dr. Samuel Betances was a powerful highlight in this conference. His resounding message that, through education, barriers are overcome, walls can be torn down and, with the pursuit of education, anything is possible. Whether you believe yourself to be well educated or not, it's never too late for continual learning; it's never too late to pick up a book and read!

I'm so proud to have attended this training. *The Baker's Dozen* that are so relevant to our foundation, passion, good decision making skills and continued learning. *¡Si Se Puede!*



Tina Galvan, Jennifer S. Hernandez, Tiffany Mai, Beverly Ford

It's Time

By: Leila Nieves
CR, Ontario, CA

I had an amazing experience at this year's SF HAAC Regional Leadership Training (RLT) held Sept. 10th-Sept. 11th. I always make an effort to participate in HAAC's professional developmental events in hopes to enhance my skills and to network with other like-minded employees. This year's RLT did not disappoint. If you didn't get a chance to attend this training, I urge you to attend the next one.

Many of us are busy with our personal lives and feel that we don't have time to attend trainings or workshops. I, too, feel busy and my to-do-list is never ending. However, I do feel it's important to prioritize activities that are important in my personal life as well as my professional career. I strongly

believe that the benefits of immersing ourselves professionally by attending leadership developmental trainings, such as this one, are worthwhile.

HAAC's RLT had a full agenda that included professional growth workshops, many opportunities for networking and an impressive executive panel of speakers. The speakers included Steve Breen, Deputy Regional Commissioner, Evangelina Hernandez, Chief ALJ of Stockton, CA ODAR; Bill Zilinski, former Regional Commissioner and Dr. Reginald F. Wells, Deputy Commissioner for Human Resources, just to name a few. And even our SF Regional Commissioner, Grace Kim, came out for this event. The room radiated of success and inspiration.

Throughout the RLT training, there were vast opportunities to speak with exec-

utives, management, and colleagues of different components. I signed up for the mentorship activity. I sat with different managers and LDP participants and heard their motivational stories of how they came to the position they now hold. They made it evident on how important it is in developing your skill set through continual learning. The overall message from the RLT was to keep investing in ourselves and in our careers. Attending trainings such as this one, was the first step for most of us.

Since we have now entered the new fiscal year, it's a good opportunity to assess our career development plan and focus on our own personal growth. It's time to take charge of our careers. I hope to see you at the next HAAC event.



Grace Kim, SF Regional Commissioner and Leila Nieves

1,000th SF HAAC Member

1,000th Member's Perspective on the 2015 HAAC Regional Leadership Training

Costa Nikoloutsopoulos



WNPSC

This year, I had the distinct honor of becoming the 1,000th member of HAAC. Soon after joining, I learned about the 2015 Regional Leadership Training, and was swayed by fellow HAAC members to attend. The conference did not disappoint—I could not have imagined the level of expertise I would have access to, nor the camaraderie I experienced. The event gave me insight into the amazing people who make up HAAC, as well as the executives that cherish its great accomplishments.

One opportunity to connect with an executive came when I watched the venerated Dr. Reginald F. Wells' presentation on skills for successful leadership. His openness towards accepting questions from the audience at the conclusion of his presentation, moved me to ask him for his recommenda-

tions on how motivated, mid-level SSA employees (whose next logical step within their own component may be years away), can reach across to other components and learn about positions and opportunities that may be available. Dr. Wells had many great suggestions, such as applying for JELP, creating an IDP, and joining leadership programs. His answer reflected the mentality of all the conference presenters; they were there to provide words of encouragement and guidance to future generations of leaders.

My question to Dr. Wells also afforded me the opportunity to connect with my fellow colleagues. I was approached by multiple participants who let me know that my question resonated with them. Their career trajectories were similar to my own, as were their interests, and I feel that the subsequent conversations I had with these colleagues will lead to long-term professional relationships.

There were many other notable moments and speeches—much too many to give due respect to in such a brief article. Suffice it to say, I heard from the likes of: Carolyn W. Colvin, Acting Commissioner; Grace Kim, Regional Commissioner of the San Francisco Region; Steve Breen, Deputy Regional Commissioner; Glen Banks, Tri-Counties Area Director; Bill Zielinski, former Regional Commissioner and of course, the keynote speaker, Dr. Sam-

uel Betances. They provided many wonderful pieces of knowledge about being a transformational leader, but one that continues to connect with me is to inspire others to be great, while being a source of inspiration yourself.

The message of inspiration was further communicated to me during a Flash Mentoring workshop on the second day of the training. Carla Valadez taught me the importance of not only being a cheerleader for yourself and others, but also galvanizing others to want to be a cheerleader for you. Additionally, Hy Hinojosa and Judy Teixeira conveyed that the first step down this path is to have an honest conversation with your supervisor about your goals for the future, and discuss how you can perform your best quality work in the present.

The Regional Leadership Training concluded with a night of camaraderie, the Gala. We ate a delicious meal, clapped for recipients of awards, laughed together, looked on in awe at traditional folk dancers, and danced the night away.

After attending this conference, I can't help but ask myself, *when is the next HAAC event and how can I help?*

New Members

August 2015

Area 3

Bernadette Valentin-Tomala
Lucy Rivera-Soria

FHFB

Costa Nikoloutsopoulos—
1000th member!
Javier J Lemus
Dora V Lorenzana
Elizabeth Margolis
Leticia Brizuela
Phillip L Estenson
Phoenicia R Walker
Porsharee Ray
Stacie Currie

September 2015

Area 1

Isela Talamantes
Jonathan Harp
Marcos Martinez
Maria Valenzuela

Area 3

Salvador Gavino

Area 4

Ashley Lozano

Area 5

Jose Salcedo
Juan Raya
Nandhu Reddy
Victor Orta

Area 6

Cindy Mejia
Daniel Dionicio
Kyle Jones
Monisha Cruz
Tiffany Mai
Tracie Sterling

Area 7

Vivian Recinos
Hector Miramontes
Jesse Gallegos
Leticia Moreno
Luis De La Cruz

Area 8

Joseph Garza

FHFB

Chyanne Tanner

October 2015

Area 7

Leticia Arevalo
Suzana E Perez

Area 8

FHFB

Christian Warrell
George Lee
Rebecca Smith



SSA offers the ability to learn different languages through Rosetta Stone. There are 31 languages to consider. Information about it is below and is from this link:

<http://personnel.ba.ssa.gov/ope/ces/wlrc/rosetta.htm>

SSA does not have unlimited capacity to sign up for Rosetta Stone. You may go on a waiting list if they are at capacity.

Note: If you sign up for this, select the Deputy Commissioner, Operations (DCO) as your component.