

KALEIDOSCOPE

SEPTEMBER 2022



SPECIAL ISSUE WITH ANNOUNCEMENTS AND RESOURCES



IN MEMORY OF
CARMEN RAMIREZ

On Friday, August 12, the County of Ventura tragically lost Supervisor Carmen Ramirez.

An amazing individual who made incredible contributions to public service, Supervisor Ramirez's legacy will live on through the work she did throughout the community and the people whose lives she forever changed. The Ventura County Management Council would like to offer sentiments of remembrance and gratitude for the life and work of Supervisor Ramirez.

Following are some sentiments from members of the Management Council Board who had the honor of working with her closely.



Supervisor Carmen Ramirez was a true champion...not just for those she represented but for everyone whom she came in contact with. She was a believer in facts and data – always digging deep into the information to ensure her vote was one that could be made with confidence. Our last Planning briefing was so typical of her. She was in her car on the way back from LAX, coming from another meeting but wanted to use every available minute of her time to “fit more in”. She was on zoom firing off questions to yet another complex land use topic always wanting to ensure she fully understood the issue as well as the impacts of her decisions.

Supervisor Ramirez also took the time to write lovely notes to staff thanking them for their good work and encouraging them in their careers. She was a force for good, generous with her time, had a quick wit, was kind with her words but importantly, you always knew where she stood. I feel her loss both personally and professionally, but I know that the County has benefited from her passion and leadership.

She will be missed, and her loss will be felt for generations to come.

Kim Prillhart, Director, Resource Management Agency

Supervisor Carmen Ramirez was a true community servant with a big heart. She truly cared about her community and everyone in it. I had an opportunity to talk with her at a recent event and she was truly interested in how Public Health served the community, outside of COVID response. We spoke about prevention and health promotion, particularly for young families. She was so in awe of our programs and had invited us to present our Nurse-Family Partnership Program and an upcoming board meeting for the Moment of Inspiration. She will be truly missed, but I know we will all keep her legacy and passion alive.

Seleta Dobrosky, Public Health

I was out of town when I received the tragic news of Carmen’s passing. I was suddenly overcome with a tremendous sense of unbelievable loss and emptiness. Although I didn’t know her well, every time she saw me, she welcomed me like an old friend. At last year’s VCCDC awards program, she insisted I sit next to her, chatting me up about a wide variety of things, all related to our shared vision around improving access to housing, programs and resources for the underserved members of our community. Her unrelenting compassion, creativity and commitment was consistent and instilled upon everyone whom she encountered, our need to do more. I know she’s counting on us to carry on her legacy in pursuit of equality and justice for all.

Christy Madden, Sr. Deputy Executive Officer, CEO

I will remember Supervisor Ramirez for her incredible contributions to public service in Oxnard and the entire Ventura County. I grew up in Oxnard and saw her as a role model and an influential force to be reckoned with. Her legacy will live on through all the good work she did, and from all the wonderful leaders she mentored. Supervisor Ramirez leaves behind a trail of light that will never be forgotten.

Jessica Jimenez, Learning and Organizational Development Administrator, CEO/HR

Supervisor Carmen Ramirez will be truly missed. Of note, was her commitment to the community and that manifested in many different ways. One of many, was her commitment to older adults and providing support for the older adult population here in Ventura County, Supervisor Ramirez did not just talk about supporting older adults or vote to support older adult endeavors, she was a person of action and she came out to help the Ventura County Area Agency on Aging deliver food to the frailest of older adults who continued to shelter in place due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Supervisor Ramirez jumping in and delivering food boxes was indicative of her character. I hope that each of us that had the opportunity to know Supervisor Ramirez or be moved by her actions, will continue her legacy and in each of our community endeavors strive to comport ourselves as she would.

Monique Nowlin, Deputy Director, Ventura County Area Agency on Aging

Supervisor Carmen Ramirez was a shining light. From the moment our paths crossed 7 years ago, she always provided guidance, mentorship, respect and compassion for each project we worked on together. Supervisor Ramirez always challenged staff when making council or board presentation with thoughtful questions, insightful opinions and clear reasons for her decision-making process. She provided encouragement to all that were around her and I feel grateful to have been able to work with her on so many important projects. She will be missed tremendously and the community will continue to honor her legacy through their good work.

Jeri Cooper, Parks Manager, Ventura County Parks –General Services Agency



EAP SERVICES AVAILABLE TO EMPLOYEES AND THEIR FAMILIES

Our Employee Assistance Program is concerned about what you may be feeling after recent events we've experienced in our workplace. At the County of Ventura, we have resources, policies, and procedures in place to support our employees during uncertain and difficult times. If you need support or help to cope, please reach out to EAP for a confidential counseling appointment with a licensed mental health professional. Our phone number is (805) 654-4327. We have phone, video, and in-person appointments available.

Other Things You Can Do:

Take media breaks – It is important to stay informed, but also to avoid taking in too much available media. Be aware of how you and your family members are reacting to continuous coverage and protect them and yourself from spending too much time with the TV, radio, internet and newspapers.

Be aware of how current events can have an emotional impact on you and those around you – These days, emotions seem closer to the surface. Tempers can be shorter, and society (as a whole) more on edge. In particular, children have a great ability to pick up on clues they feel and observe around them. They may need more physical contact, reassurance, time, and patience.

Take action – Don't let fear or anxiety keep you stuck. Transform your troubling thoughts and feelings into healthy behaviors, like exercise or meditation. Find wellness activities or online resources such as podcasts or programs that can help you relax and reduce stress (among other things). Increase activities that are healing for you, such as time spent with family, being outdoors, pursuing hobbies you enjoy, getting together with friends, in meditation, in prayer, or talking with a counselor. Also remember to keep a mixture of activity and relaxation and maintain as normal a routine as possible.

How to Recognize Stress

This chart describes personal responses that can be common signs of anxiety and stress. You may notice some of them in yourself after you learn about something big in the news.

Your Behavior	Your Body	Your Emotions	Your Thinking
- An increase or decrease in energy and activity levels	- Having stomachaches or diarrhea	- Being anxious or fearful	- Having trouble remembering things
- An increase in use of alcohol, tobacco, or illegal drugs	- Having headaches and other pains	- Feeling depressed	- Feeling confused
- An increase in irritability, with outbursts of anger and frequent arguing	- Losing your appetite or eating too much	- Feeling guilty	- Having trouble thinking clearly and concentrating
- Having trouble relaxing or sleeping	- Sweating or having chills	- Feeling angry	- Having difficulty making decisions
- Frequent crying	- Getting tremors or muscle twitches	- Feeling heroic, euphoric, or invulnerable	
- Excessive worry	- Being easily startled	- Not caring about anything	
- Wanting to be alone most of the time		- Feeling overwhelmed by sadness	
- Blaming other people for everything			
- Having difficulty communicating or listening			
- Having difficulty giving or accepting help			
- Inability to feel pleasure or have fun			

Call EAP at (805) 654-4327



Employee Assistance Program



Managing Through Complex Emotions

People need to think — not only rationally, but also intuitively and instinctively — that the leader and his or her people understand what's going on, know what they're doing, have a plan, and that they care.

Change, whether at work or home can produce a variety of reactions and complex emotions. It can look and feel like grief, with its predictable stages of shock and denial, bargaining, anger, depression, and finally acceptance. There can also be temporary disorientation, memories of past losses or trauma, disappointment in perceived authority figures and structures, and even existential issues, i.e. "Everything changes and do I matter?" Change can bring up fear of the unknown and anxiety about what else may happen. Managers can help employees cope with these complex emotions by providing a predictable routine, a safe space to talk, and to provide more resources, if needed.

It is important to connect with and communicate with employees and assess for who may be having difficulty adjusting to the new circumstances. Changes in an employee's Personal appearance, Dependability, Problem-solving, Job knowledge, Productivity, Judgment, or Ability to Work with Others may indicate that a person is struggling.

How to approach someone who may be struggling or impaired

- Talk to the employee in private
- Reassure them of confidentiality
- Be compassionate and empathetic
- Describe the behaviors you have observed that have caused concern
- Ask how the employee would like to be supported, what she/he needs
- Offer options – possibility of vacation time, FMLA, flexible schedule
- You don't have to be a therapist – refer to EAP!

As a manager, you can provide both practical and emotional support to employees. Practical support includes gradual re-integration to the work environment for employees that have been away, flexibility in how the job gets done, allowing vacations, assessing general stability of employees, identifying warning signs, monitoring and intervening.

Emotional Support consists of being compassionate and humane, using empathy, acknowledging the reality of the situation, being patient, having resource list, Wellness, EAP info handy, encouraging self-care, scheduling a debriefing or training with EAP.

More Tips for Creating a Positive Work Environment

- Routine is hugely important in reducing fear. Give people predictability in an uncertain world.
- Regular communication can help give people context and clarity.
- Stay positive and highlight progress – always find victories, no matter how small, to celebrate
- Be thoughtful about how you share information, and how you deliver it to different sets of people.
- Be as kind, clear, and concise as you can in giving directives

Take care of Yourself!

As a manager, you may also be experiencing complex emotions. You can be a calming presence for others if you have taken the time to process your own feelings and engaged in your favorite self-care activities. You will be better prepared to create a stable and emotionally safe work environment for others if you have taken the time to center yourself.

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

BY CHRISTY MADDEN

As promised in our last newsletter, big changes are in store for your Council. We've elected a new slate of officers, added three new members, and bid farewell to Mark Lorenzen, who has served as the organization's Treasurer since 2012 and joined our Board in 2010. Elsewhere in this newsletter you can read a little about our newest members including their experience and what they hope to bring to the organization and our members. Through an open and transparent recruitment process, we've added new members from CEO Training and Development, GSA Parks Department, and HCA's Public Health Department.



With a new slate of Board members, this will be my final President's message – I will continue to serve on the Board and look forward to facilitating the transition to our new President, Rajima Danish-Engel from the Human Services Agency. Rajima has served on the Board since 2018 and as our Secretary since 2019. Rajima brings tremendous energy, creativity, and passion to the position and embodies the organization's mission to promote excellence among our members by providing opportunities for professional growth through education, networking, exchanging information, celebrating success, and developing future leaders. Through her leadership, supported by the rest of the Board, the organization will cater offerings to the interests of our members, leverage our financial resources by co-sponsoring programs that align with our vision, and design social activities that maximize members' participation by expanding the types of programs offered.

Serving as this organization's president has been one of the major highlights of my 35 plus years with the County. As a life-long civil servant, I experience great joy when we celebrate accomplishments on behalf of those we serve, provide opportunities to help develop strong, innovative, and thoughtful leaders, and enhance the public's perception of servant leadership. **As a member-driven organization, your voice is important and we want to hear from you – what do you like, what is missing, and what can we do better? Visit our website – www.vcmanagementcouncil.org or send us an e-mail management.council@ventura.org.**

In closing, I'd like to extend my deepest gratitude and appreciation to our members. It has been an honor and a privilege to serve in this role and now it's time to embrace the future with fresh perspectives, unbridled energy, and creativity. Please join me in welcoming Rajima and our other officers to their new roles. Congratulations to you all and together let's make 2022 better than ever!

**OUR MANY THANKS TO CHRISTY FOR
HER LEADERSHIP AS PRESIDENT**



A PERSPECTIVE ON WOMEN AND LEADERSHIP

**BY BETSY SWANSON HOLLINGER
MANAGER, LEARNING AND
ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT CEO HR**

Me?? Oh no, I can't possibly do that, I thought to myself. I was asked by Rajima to write an article on Women and Leadership for the Management Council newsletter. The topic is so broad, it seems too hard to narrow for one article. My gut reaction is that I can't, I don't know enough to write this article. This wasn't the first time I've had this reaction. I have a pattern of this. This article may speak to anyone who may doubt themselves and their ability to rise in the organization and as well as those looking for best practices in leadership.

Nearly every promotion I've had I did not actively seek out. Usually, I am tapped on the shoulder by a senior leader and asked to apply. As a matter of fact, I'm usually quite content with my current role and not looking for promotions. Who wants that extra responsibility? Extra stress? To have to be hyper-professional, lose myself in the process, not be there for my family, and in my head this list goes on and on. Lastly, I can't really apply for that promotion because there is no way I can fill the shoes of my predecessor. There would be no way I can replicate them.

Then it's weeks, months, and one time a whole year went by full of self-reflection and talking to mentors and peer mentors before I actually decided to apply. What is that about? Self-sabotage? Playing small? Lacking motivation?

What I've come to realize is that I've never seen myself as a stereotypical leader. In my mind it was something else, something that was not me. I'm a bit unfiltered, not as organized as I'd like to be, my connections are based on keeping it real ALL the time, and I like to speak my truth, which may not always be popular. My recurring and unhelpful thought was that I would have to change who I fundamentally am and how I show up at work if I promote.

No thank you.



What I found in every promotion is the reason I was asked to apply for each job was that the organization wanted more of my influence. Huh.

Who I am and how I show up, they want MORE of that. Really? It's true. The higher you go the more your influence expands. Once I came to terms with this fact, I was all in.

Even when my predecessors had large scale influence and organizational wide outcomes, I was going to do the job and be me at the same time. I often tell myself I'm a vessel to build a positive work environment and get meaningful results. What I realized is that I am able to do the job but my way.

The scope and scale of my work has always increased as I've risen in organizations. It always takes me a year to figure out a new job, from learning the systems to building the high trust relationships across all the team members and stakeholders. So the scale changes and my confidence grows but I am still me and get to be me. I don't have to pretend or fake being more professional, but my authentic self shows up.

EVEN WHEN I SPEAK MY TRUTH. I'M FINDING MY TRUTH IS APPRECIATED AND VALUED.

As I researched women in leadership for this article there are key takeaways for women who want to grow in the organization.

I have summarized these points and referenced the articles. By adopting these mindsets and behaviors the waves of the universe will start to propel you upwards in the organization. They did for me. Note to the reader: County of Ventura is a living organism made up of human beings, so these ideas can speak to men as well.

1: MASTER BEING A GOOD TEAM MEMBER FIRST

A good leader puts people before themselves. It's hard to get a group of people together and turn them into an aligned high performing team when your focus is on yourself. Your job is to get work done through people as a leader. If you are not a good team member, chances are people may not want to work with you. This is one of the largest reasons people do not get a promotion. They don't have positive relationships with their peers and team members. If you are running around crazy busy all the time in meetings, you may be inadvertently sending a signal to your team that you are not that available for them. What messages are you sending to your team? Take time to self-reflect how you are a team member not just using your position power to stay busy and make "important" decisions.



2: THE HUMAN SIDE CANNOT BE REPLACED.

As we move into a more automated workplace the use of artificial intelligence will be able to do more of our technical work. Here is where you are not replaceable. A bot cannot see, hear, and appreciate the specific contributions of team members. When team members are seen, heard and valued, they give discretionary effort, are more engaged and fulfilled in their work. You need to acknowledge emotions, have celebrations, care, and bond with your team members. All these are non-automatable.

3: HARD VS. SOFT POWER. KNOW WHEN YOU NEED TO USE BOTH.

If you are someone who does not play “hardball” reframe your belief to “my approach needs to match the circumstance”. Using softer power may be more comfortable for you such as in building alliances/being collaborative, offering assistance, and transforming attitudes. However, if you let the agenda in your team meetings get hijacked by interrupters or tangents, then end without clarity of direction or revisit the same issues with no outcomes, you will lose people. There are times you need to create team rules, set boundaries, and hold people accountable for breaking the rules. Your team members need you to do this or you lose your credibility. They will value you more for doing it!

4: VISIBILITY IS KEY

It's your job to let others know what you are up to. Our bosses and our peers cannot mind read and know all that we are doing.

CONNECT YOUR WORK WITH OTHERS

Local government work can seem very silo'ed. Help others see your value by showing them how your job connects with theirs. This allows others to see more clearly why and how they need you. People will see you as a leader that can support and complement their own work.

SPEAK UP IN MEETINGS AND WITH OTHERS

Adopt the mindset that you are being paid to have a point of view and use it. However, if everything out of your mouth tends to be judging or critical on why an idea won't work, challenge yourself to think of how to make the idea work or state an unseen positive impact of the idea that is being presented from time to time. Practice really understanding the problem, ask questions, and be solution focused.

4: VISIBILITY IS KEY...CONTINUED

It's your job to let others know what you are up to. Our bosses and our peers cannot mind read and know all that we are doing.

TAKE LUNCH BREAKS WITH OTHERS.

I personally have a problem with portion control and tend to eat whatever I am served, and it can be expensive eating out regularly. I choose to bring lunch then picnic with a peer, meet for coffee, or a walk to check-in and stay connected during my breaktime. Building connections is a force multiplier. It's nearly impossible to grow your leadership skills in a vacuum. Have sounding boards and be a sounding board for others, and your influence will spread. Peer mentoring is a powerful resource right at your fingertips and the new currency for effective leadership development.

5: HELP AMPLIFY THE GOOD WORK OF OTHER WOMEN.

In meetings when a woman shares an idea you believe in, chime in and add your own comment on why that idea is a good for the organization. When multiple women chime in on another woman's idea, the whole room is hearing and processing that original idea in a positive light. Women can be the waves of the universe helping each other to grow in the organization.

*Empowered
Women
Empower
Women*

If you have made it to the end of this article, thank you for taking the time to learn about leadership, my journey with it and its best practices. We are so grateful to work in a place that values being a learning organization. I encourage you to read as much as you can on these topics, watch LinkedIn Learning videos, and talk about your leadership experiences with your peers.

This is how we get better individually and together, so here's to being the best version of yourself as a manager in our County. **Cheers!**

Sources and recommended learning:

<https://hbr.org/2018/11/how-women-manage-the-gendered-norms-of-leadership>
<https://hbr.org/2022/01/how-women-can-get-comfortable-playing-politics-at-work>
<https://hbr.org/2020/04/7-leadership-lessons-men-can-learn-from-women?autocomplete=true>
<https://brenebrown.com/podcast/creating-meaningful-connection-at-work/>
<https://www.linkedin.com/learning/executive-presence-tips-for-women/what-is-executive-presence-anyway?autoplay=true&u=26115042>



Betsy Swanson Hollinger
CEO HR

NEW BOARD MEMBERS

Welcome

CLICK ON EACH PERSON'S IMAGE TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THEM OR VISIT VCMANAGEMENTCOUNCIL.ORG/ABOUT-THE-COUNCIL/BOARD-OF-DIRECTORS



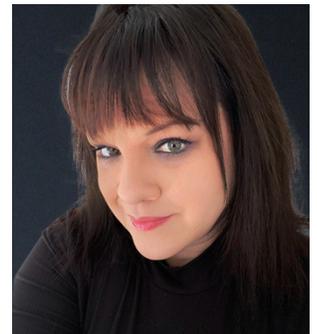
KIM PRILLHART
RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AGENCY



SELETA DOBROSKY
PUBLIC HEALTH



JERI COOPER
GENERAL SERVICES AGENCY



LISA BARBACOVI
HEALTH CARE AGENCY



JESSICA JIMENEZ
COUNTY EXECUTIVE OFFICE

NEW BOARD OFFICERS

Thank you!

CLICK ON EACH PERSON'S IMAGE TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THEM OR VISIT VCMANAGEMENTCOUNCIL.ORG/ABOUT-THE-COUNCIL/BOARD-OF-DIRECTORS

PLEASE FEEL FREE TO REACH OUT TO ANYONE ON THE BOARD WITH IDEAS FOR THE COUNCIL. WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!



RAJIMA DANISH
PRESIDENT

JERI COOPER
VICE PRESIDENT



CORY RUBRIGHT
TREASURER



SELETA DOBROSKY
SECRETARY



MARK LORENZEN

Former Treasurer

Many thanks to Mark for his 11 years of service on the Management Council Board. We wish him well!



DOG WALKING, NETWORKING & LEADERSHIP- SEE YOU NEXT TIME



Members of the Management Council spent a day at the Ventura County Animal Services Department walking dogs and visiting cats that are available for adoption. In addition to gaining appreciation for what our colleagues at VCAS do every day, we had an opportunity to take a break from our regular daily routine and give animals being housed there some extra care and attention.

For more information on how to volunteer, foster and adopt as well as see which animals are currently looking for a home, visit VCAS's webpages below.

Volunteer Info: www.vcas.us/volunteer
Foster Info: www.vcas.us/foster
Adoption Info: www.vcas.us/adopt

Dogs: www.vcas.us/dogs
Cats: www.vcas.us/cats
Rabbits: www.vcas.us/rabbits
Other Species: www.vcas.us/others



AWARDS

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE NOMINEES!

Join us in celebrating all the nominees listed to the right.

To see who received the awards and their achievements stay tuned for the award videos to come out in September by email.

Special thank you to **Derrick Wilson** on the Management Council Board for your expert project management to make the videos and recognition of recipients happen!

**AWARD VIDEOS
EMAILED IN
SEPTEMBER!**

BEST KEPT SECRET

Adriane Gil-Stefansen	Scott Holder
Ana Alatorre	Ron Marotto
Bev Hansen	Jeewoong June Kim
Bryan Friedman	Jennifer Peters
Gabriela Aguila	Michael Parigian

INNOVATION

Hannah Edmondson
Jennifer Bramlette
Randy Perez
Tricia Maier

INTEGRITY

Amber Butler
Emma Armstrong
Jill Ward
Rigoberto Vargas

MENTORING

Cliff Chroust	Jose Luis Vazquez
Diana Zenner	Mindy Fogg
Gerald Chambers	Natalie Hernandez
John Wright	Tricia Maier

RISING STAR

Allyson Harmon	Cynthia Salas
Cameron Henderson	Michele Guzman
Christopher Solis	Ruby Ortiz
Crystal Stratton	Ryan Lippincott

CUSTOMER SERVICE

Alicia Villicana	J. Tabin Cosio
Chris Rosa	Steve Carroll
Douglas Arnett	Teresa Barron
Eric Tennessen	Tisha Maeda
Ian McGraw	Winston Wright

Save the Date



THE SCOOP'S ON US!

Join us and get "The Scoop" on the Ventura County Management Council and enjoy a sweet treat on us!



Mister Softee - R Parking Lot below the HOA
September 28 from 1-3pm

Coming Soon

Join

US!

The Management Council will be expanding it's Board of Directors!! Stay tuned for an announcement about how you can join the Board.

A scenic landscape featuring a range of mountains under a dramatic sky. The sky is filled with soft, golden light, suggesting a sunset or sunrise, with wispy clouds catching the light. The mountains in the foreground are dark and silhouetted against the bright sky, while the background mountains are hazy and layered. The overall mood is peaceful and contemplative.

**OUR ABILITY TO
REACH UNITY IN
DIVERSITY WILL BE
THE BEAUTY AND
THE TEST OF OUR
CIVILIZATION.**

MAHATMA GHANDI