

KALEIDOSCOPE

MARCH 2022



LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

BY CHRISTY MADDEN

Welcome to 2022 and, 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**



REFLECTION ON BLACK HISTORY MONTH *BY DERRICK WILSON*

Black History Month, or African American History, is celebrated every year during the month of February. What started out as a one-week celebration in 1926 by historian Carter G. Woodson, evolved into a month-long event with the first celebration of Black History Month taking place from January 2 to February 28 in 1970.

Recently, the County Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Council (DEI) held a Black History Month Panel with African American leaders representing a variety of County agencies, levels of leadership and years of service. I was fortunate to be invited to participate on the panel and have been asked to share my experience here. During the panel, which was virtually attended by over 300 County employees, the panelists answered the questions of what Black history means to her/him, how her/his personal and family history influenced who they are today, how they hope people will look back at this time in our nation's history, and a formative or important moment in their journey to get to where they are now.

I have had many people thank myself and members of the panel for sharing our personal experiences and providing insight into how we got to where we are at now and how we see the future. Participating on the panel was enriching for me because I was meeting some of the panelists for the first time and I walked away moved by their comments. It reinforced the reality that although we share certain common experiences, our paths and perspectives are diverse. This speaks to the greater African American experience; we are diverse and multifaceted with a rich history. No one person can represent all African Americans.

**MENTIONED AT
THE BLACK
HISTORY
MONTH PANEL**

Kirk Franklin's recent arrangement of "Lift Every Voice and Sing," written by James Weldon Johnson and John Rosamond Johnson in 1900.

[Link to Video](#)



The DEI Black History Month Panel provided an opportunity to showcase our pride and excellence. Black history is American history which should be celebrated and discussed every day. This holds true for all the other cultures, races, religions, and genders that make up our great nation. Some of the experiences of African Americans can be difficult to share, so I applaud my fellow panelists for sharing stories that told of how resilient we are and how despite obstacles here and there, we continue to press forward. We all contribute to Black history by being the leaders that we are and educating and inspiring those around us.

It is great to reflect on how far we have come and how in my lifetime so much has changed. I have opportunities available to me that were not options for my parents and grandparents, and this is a direct result of the sacrifices and the fight for equality and inclusion led by all those who came before me. But while it is great to look in the rear-view mirror and honor all that has been done, I also feel Black History Month is an excellent opportunity to seek out the outstanding achievements of African Americans that happen every day and it is a moment to stop and ponder what the future holds for us all. Black History Month is more than events of the past.

Although the month of February ended, I still celebrate Black History throughout the year by seeking out interesting things to learn about, by attending special events, and museum and art exhibits. Black history is American history, and I am grateful the DEI Council gave us the opportunity to share our stories.

DERRICK WILSON
Staff Services Manager
Public Works Agency



FOUNDATIONS OF DEI LEARNING SERIES

Be on the lookout for more information related to the Foundations of DEI Learning Series.

You can learn more about DEI efforts at the County of Ventura by visiting <https://www.ventura.org/county-executive-office/dei/>.



DOG WALKING, NETWORKING & LEADERSHIP



Ventura County Animal Services is a lifesaving, open-admission municipal shelter servicing eight (8) cities and all unincorporated areas of Ventura County. We offer numerous services to the community. Some of these services include animal sheltering, pet adoptions, lost & found, field services, cruelty investigations, pet licensing, low-cost vaccination clinics, no-cost spay or neuter clinics, volunteer and foster opportunities and emergency disaster response. **Our biggest call-to-action is our need for foster parents who can temporarily care for shelter pets in need.**

To help you get to know our animals, we are organizing a Walk-A-Shelter-Dog event with Management Council in April and we hope you all can make it. To learn more about our programs and services please visit www.vcas.us.

But if you'd like to watch videos and see our animals play together, we suggest visiting our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/vcanimalservices. See you in April!

Bonus Info

According to Inc.com there are at least three ways owning a dog makes you, and any children in a pet household, better leaders: lessons in responsibility, opportunities to practice empathy and collaboration, and the many benefits of walking for you and your pet.

Come Walk a Shelter Dog
with
Management Council!

Monday April 11th
11 am to 1 pm

Ventura County Animal Services
600 Aviation Drive
Camarillo, 93010





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 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



GIDEON DAY: NATIONAL PUBLIC DEFENDER DAY

March 18th is national Public Defender Day. It is also called “Gideon Day” in honor of the United States Supreme Court’s decision in *Gideon v. Wainwright* (1963) 372 U.S. 335, which established the right to counsel in criminal cases. The [Ventura County Public Defender](#) is proud to provide exceptional legal representation to those in our community who cannot afford an attorney.


Our core mission is to seek equal justice and due process, but we go beyond the courtroom to do so.

Our staff are experts at connecting people to needed services, including clearing of criminal records, mental health treatment, and treatment for substance use disorder. Every day of the year, we demonstrate our commitment to improving outcomes for our clients and the community.

“If an obscure Florida convict named Clarence Earl Gideon had not sat down in his prison cell with a pencil and paper to write a letter to the Supreme Court, and if the Court had not taken the trouble to look for merit in that one crude petition ... the vast machinery of American law would have gone on functioning undisturbed. But Gideon did write that letter, the Court did look into his case ... and the whole course of American legal history has been changed.”

Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy
Speech Before the New England Conference on the
Defense of Indigent Persons Accused of Crime
November 1, 1963

More information and source of quote and image :
<https://www.justice.gov/archives/otj/legacy-gideon-v-wainwright>



The Legacy
— of —
Gideon v. Wainwright

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!

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

MAHATMA GHANDI

