



**SPECIAL  
POINTS OF  
INTEREST:**

- **The first lady visits UC Merced!**
- **Fruit and Veggies: Eat healthy on a Budget!**
- **Immigration and Healthcare the Debate continues**
- **Health Reform: Will it happen?**

**INSIDE  
THIS ISSUE:**

- Change in Health Reform 2
- CVHN AmeriCorps Members 3
- Book of the Month 4
- June Events 4



## Michelle Obama and Her Enduring Impression on Public Service

The highly anticipated visit from our First Lady, Michelle Obama, was very much welcomed by the many who attended the UC Merced commencement on May 16, 2009. This was not only a day of celebration for the UCM graduates, but also a proud and momentous time for the Merced community and the entire Central Valley. Various articles all over the nation reported the excitement of this event. Many emphasized the outrageous costs and complaints from attendees, while others reported the more positive aspects such as job opportunities and recognition that has been long awaited. Yet, on this memorable day, it was as if all controversy was forgotten as Mrs. Obama stepped onto the stage. Once she began to deliver her speech, the crowd fell quiet as her voice echoed with indisputable conviction and inspirational authenticity.

The first lady quickly connected with the crowd as she genuinely expressed her life



struggles, and her motivation for public service. As Mrs. Obama approached the end of her speech, she quoted advocate and activist Marian Wright Edelman, who said, **“Service is the rent we pay for living....it is the true measure, the only**

**measure of our success.”**

It is with great pride and honor to recognize the road our First Lady has taken and continues to take as a true advocate of public service; from the days she founded and directed the Chicago Chapter of Public Allies, an AmeriCorps program that prepares youth for public service, to her current time as the first African American First Lady. Her empowering approach of community service will forever leave an impression on generations to come. Therefore, as AmeriCorps members, let us remember that through our service, we have become part of the communities’ struggle for better health and economic independence, and because of this we are successful.

**Written By: Julissa Gonzalez**

## Fruit and Veggie Fest Shows How to “Eat Right When Money’s Tight”

On May 21<sup>st</sup>, nearly 100 students from Washington Elementary gathered for Fruit and Veggie Fest at Save Mart Supermarkets in Madera. The event aimed at helping local fourth grade students and low-income shoppers learn how to eat healthy on a budget. A state-wide effort, Fruit and Veggie Fest was designed to empower low-income families to be Champions for Change and make healthy, active living a priority even during a tough economy.

Fruit and Veggie Fest was hosted by the *Network for a Healthy California—Central Valley Region Retail Program*, a program administered by the Central Valley Health Network (CVHN). The day’s event was made possible with the help of several partners including Save Mart Supermarkets, Darin M. Camarena Health Centers, Health Net, Madera Community Food Bank, Madera First 5, Dairy Council of California, and the *Network’s Children’s Power Play! Campaign*.



“With the state of the economy, we want to make sure that families make wise and inexpensive food choices and

that good health is not sacrificed during a bad economy,” said Norma Vail, a community health leader for CVHN.

A recent study by the Central Valley Health Policy Institute revealed that the percentage of overweight and obesity in the Central Valley is significantly higher than the statewide average. Through Fruit and Veggie Fest, participants learned useful cost-saving tips that can help them take charge of their health to help reduce the risk of serious health problems, including obesity, heart disease, type 2 diabetes and certain types of cancer.

Activities included food demonstrations, store tours, food tastings, educational physical activity stations and free glucose and blood pressure screenings for adults.

Fruit and Veggie Fest in Madera is an example of how the *Network for a Healthy California Retail Program* partners with small and large retailers across California, connecting with the communities they serve through events and promotions that encourage customers to make healthy choices each time they shop.

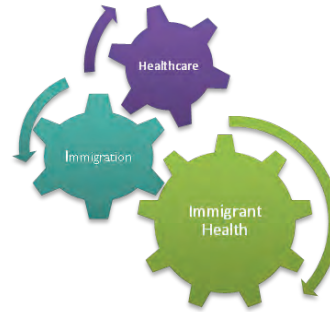
**Written By: Erica Mireles**

## When Immigration and Healthcare Collide, What would you do?

*“Unfortunately for Jimenez and thousands of other like him, he was and remains caught between two intensely flawed systems in America: Immigration and Healthcare”*

Imagine this, for various reasons (work, school, vacation) you are traveling in another country where you are not a native. One day, while driving you are hit by a drunk driver resulting in substantial brain injury. After being resuscitated about 3 times you are finally stable and within months become ready to leave to a rehabilitation center. Unfortunately, your lack of insurance has drained the community hospital where you have been admitted at the cost of \$1.5 million and they are desperately trying to find a place for you without a cost to them. After several failed attempts the hospital decides to deport you back to your native country and does so without thinking twice about the therapy, medicines and care you will need. If it is hard to imagine that such a thing could happen, well it did. Luis Jimenez

was an illegal immigrant working in Florida and had traveled to the US from Guatemala seeking what many immigrants do; the American Dream, the lucrative promise of financial and



personal success. Unfortunately for Jimenez and thousands of other like him, he was and remains caught between two intensely flawed systems in America: **Immigration and Healthcare**. Medical ethicists are troubled by this situation and there is no clear cut

answer. Did the hospital violate ethical rights in not providing the care or is it up to Jimenez's native country of Guatemala to take care of him? What is the right thing to do?

While the story may be distressing it is important to consider that millions of people live outside their country of birth, access to health care and who should pay for it remains unanswered. An open and diplomatic discussion on immigrant health is still pending. When it does take place a pragmatic approach as to how to make best use of the resources available in the country of origin and country of current residence is key and will help avoid situations like those experienced by Jimenez and countless more.

**Written By:**  
**Cynthia Mendez**

## Has Changed Finally Come to Health Care?

It has been seven months since a new administration took presidential office, and yet there are still 47 million Americans uninsured. Faced with a troubling economy, a stalemate war, and rising unemployment, will universal health care ever come to America? Will health care ever be reformed?

With the economy on the focus of many political agenda, decisions regarding health care reform have taken a different turn. On a Senate Finance Committee last Thursday, Max Baucus, Chair of the Committee, stated that Congress' health care overhaul plan would cover 94%-96% of the population but not the undocumented immigrants, who

represent between 15%-22% of the 47 million Americans that are uninsured. The Senate Finance Committee is also considering a tax-base employer-sponsored health benefits that would include capping the amount of health benefits that can qualify for an exemption, taxing higher-income residents, and eliminating the exemption and creating a system base on deductions or tax credits. The federal government is also considering cuts in Medicare, especially in reimbursement and benefits for individuals enrolled in the Medicare-Advantage program. Congress is considering restructuring the plans by phasing down Medicare Advantage payments so that they eventually equal traditional Medicare costs since Medicare Advantage HMO plans are paid 13% above traditional Medicare, or \$1,188 more per member. Additional restructuring involves the payment formula system currently being used to reimburse physicians, and the benefits that are offered to Advantage patients.

In California, Governor Schwar-

zenegger announced last Thursday that he is considering the elimination of Healthy Families, Medi-Cal, and CalWORKS. The governor is proposing to cut \$750 million from state Medi-Cal spending through cutting reimbursement and tightening eligibility standards. However, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services announced last Wednesday that it will make available \$75 million to help states expand health insurance access to the uninsured.

These are just a few of the changes that state and federal legislatures are considering. While it is uncertain as to which direction the legislatures will take, there is a possibility that many of these programs will soon disappear. As residents, we must await until the reformation comes. Until then, many more changes must take place in an effort to help ensure that almost every resident, rich or poor, black or white is insured.

**Written By: Christel Tee Sy**



## Erica Mireles

CVHN  
Fresno



Which do you prefer: High salary or job satisfaction? **Job satisfaction**—a high salary doesn't mean much if you're unhappy with what you do.

Which is your most favorite book ever? **I don't have a favorite, but I did enjoy reading *The Blank Slate: The Modern Denial of Human Nature* by Steven Pinker.**

What television character do you simply adore? **Sheldon Cooper from "The Big Bang Theory"—he's hilarious!**

What is your taste in music? **I prefer alternative music. Some of my favorite bands include: Rise Against, The Bravery, Jack's Mannequin, The Honorary Title, and Green Day.**

Which is your favorite genre of movies? **I pretty much like all genres except for horror.**

If you could have a luncheon with any three people (real or fictitious/ from any time period, dead or alive), which three people would you choose and why? **I would choose family members of mine who have passed...I miss them!**

If given a complete freedom to start afresh, what profession would you choose and why? **I wouldn't change a thing. I love public health and I hope to make significant contributions.**

What is your idea of fun? If given a choice to skip work for a day, how would you spend the entire day? **My idea of fun is anything having to do with movies or music. If given a choice to skip work for a day, and with a little planning, I would definitely go to a concert.**

If given a choice, which animal would you want to be? **Why? I would want to be an elephant because I've always loved them.**

What's been your best experience working at your Health Center? **My best experience has been being involved in all of the *Network for a Healthy California* campaigns and programs.**

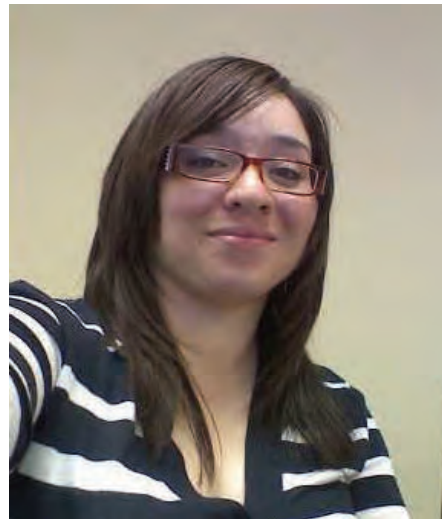
When do you have the most fun at work? **I have the most fun at work when I'm not technically at work...haha. It's fun to be out of the office working at outreach events. Events are a lot of work, but they're also very rewarding.**

Who do you enjoy working with the most here? **What do you like about them? I could never choose...everyone I work with here at the CVHN—Fresno office is great!**

Which manager do you admire the most at your health center? **What do you admire about that person? I admire my site supervisor Nichole Mosqueda because she's very knowledgeable and good at what she does.**

## Cynthia Mendez

CVHN  
Sacramento



Which do you prefer: High salary or job satisfaction? **In reality both are important, but genuine happiness comes from being satisfied with doing what you love.**

Which is your most favorite book ever? **Tough one but I will say *Kite Runner* by Khaled Hosseini**

What television character do you simply adore? **Not too much TV but I must say Stewie Griffin from Family Guy.**

What is your taste in music? **I enjoy an eclectic mix of Spanish, English (no country please!) and World music.**

Which is your favorite genre of movies? **Scary, Action and Comedy in that order.**

If you could have a luncheon with any three people (real or fictitious/ from any time period, dead or alive), which three people would you choose and why? **This is tough but I would say: My amazing grandfather because I miss his inspiring presence. President Barack Obama because he has overcome adversity and succeeded. Lastly but no least I would say Bettina Aptheker because her work in woman studies has changed the way I view the world.**

If given a complete freedom to start afresh, what profession would you choose and why? **If I would start completely fresh I would seriously consider choosing to be an animal trainer at SeaWorld or other animal parks. The ability to communicate and interact with whales and dolphins is one of a kind!**

What is your idea of fun? If given a choice to skip work for a day, how would you spend the entire day? **My idea of fun varies but I would most likely enjoy a day of peaceful reading and being around those that I love and who bring peace to my life.**

If given a choice, which animal would you want to be? **Why? DOLPHIN 100% they are beautiful and intelligent.**

What's been your best experience working at CVHN? **I enjoy learning about all that the Network does and what the members do for the community; it is incredible, inspiring and heartwarming to see.**

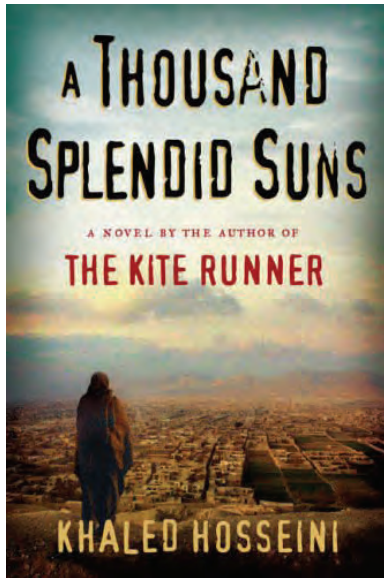
When do you have the most fun at work? **I enjoy many aspects of working in the office environment but I do enjoy the days I get to go out and visit the various health centers and see firsthand the health-care being delivered to those who need it the most.**

Who do you enjoy working with the most here? **What do you like about them? I work with many people and I would say I enjoy working with many of them because they are open-minded, respectful and caring individuals.**

Which manager do you admire the most at your CVHN? **What do you admire about that person? Although I do have many interactions with various directors, Soshia Quintero is someone who I admire among the leaderships staff. She is passionate, respectful and pragmatic. I admire her leadership style and how she places importance in hearing what others have to contribute.**

# What are *You* Reading?

In the interest of cultivating more and more readers, this section is dedicated to introducing and highlighting an interesting book read by our AmeriCorps Members.



## A Thousand Splendid Suns

By: Khaled Hosseini

Born a generation apart and with very different ideas about love and family, Mariam and Laila are two women brought jarringly together by war, by loss and by fate. As they endure the ever escalating dangers around them - in their home as well as in the streets of Kabul - they come to form a bond that makes them both sisters and mother-daughter to each other, and that will ultimately alter the course not just of their own lives but of the next generation. With heart-wrenching power and suspense, Hosseini shows how a woman's love for her family can move her to shocking and heroic acts of self-sacrifice, and that in the end it is love, or even the memory of love, that is often the key to survival.

# What's going on in June?

## AmeriCorps End of the year Retreat:

June 25-27 2009. As a gift for the hard work and dedication from all members, a retreat to the Headlands Institute in Sausalito, CA. The Three day and two night trip will consist of several fun activities which will include: team building exercises, workshops, bonfires and much more. This will be a trip for CVHN AmeriCorps Members and for other Health Corps groups throughout California.

[www.yni.org/hi/](http://www.yni.org/hi/)

## National Sun Safety Week

National Sun Safety Week is observed from June 1st through the 7th and is an annual observance sponsored by the Sun Safety Alliance. The week is meant to reduce the development of skin cancer in the U.S. According to research, you can get sunburned even on a cloudy day, children get an average of 3 times more sun exposure than adults, and up to 80% of a person's lifetime sun exposure occurs before the age of 18.

<http://www.sunsafetyalliance.org/>

## World Environmental Day :June 5th

World Environment Day was established by the United Nations General Assembly in 1972 to mark the opening of the Stockholm Conference on the Human Environment. Another resolution, adopted by the General Assembly the same day, led to the creation of UNEP.

World Environment Day can be celebrated in many ways, including street rallies, bicycles parades, green concerts, essay and poster competitions in schools, tree planting, recycling efforts, clean-up campaigns and much more. In many countries, this annual event is used to enhance political attention and action.

On this World Environment Day, let us examine the state of our environment. Let us consider carefully the actions which each of us must take, and then address ourselves to our common task of preserving all life on earth in a mood of sober resolution and quiet confidence.



## Central Valley Health Network

Incorporated in 1998, the Central Valley Health Network (CVHN) is a consortium of 12 Federally Qualified Health Center corporations that provide comprehensive preventive primary care services and advocate on behalf of low-income and medically underserved families throughout the northern, Central Valley and Inland Empire areas of California. In most Central Valley communities, CVHN members are the only safety net provider.

CVHN's mission is to facilitate community health centers' strength in the marketplace and to support member's effective delivery of high quality and accessible health care. CVHN staff support members through: advocacy, technical assistance, program development and administration, and training.

The AmeriCorps Informer is a monthly publication written, edited and reviewed by current AmeriCorps members throughout CVHN. Its purpose is to provide insightful and informative news and current events to our members. The newsletter also serves as a means to stay informed about events or changes happening within the organization. It also introduces all AmeriCorps members to the entire network therefore encouraging networking and collaboration opportunities.

2000 O Street, Suite 100

Sacramento, CA 95811

Phone: 916.552.2846

## Caring For California's Heartland

### Editorial Board

**Cynthia Mendez - CVHN Editor**

**Julissa Gonzalez - GVHC Editor**

**Christel Tee Sy - UHC Editor**

**Erica Mireles- CVHN Editor**

**Check us out on Facebook:**

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Central-Valley-Health-Network-AmeriCorps/92140459176>