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January 18, 2022

TO: Supervisor Holly J. Mitchell, Chair  
Supervisor Hilda L. Solis  
Supervisor Sheila Kuehl  
Supervisor Janice Hahn  
Supervisor Kathryn Barger

FROM: Otto Solórzano, Acting Director

SUBJECT: **IMPLEMENTATION OF THE L.A. FOUND INITIATIVE (ITEM NO. 2, AGENDA OF FEBRUARY 20, 2018)**

On February 20, 2018, your Board unanimously approved a motion by Supervisors Hahn and Barger to establish the L.A. Found Initiative, a Countywide effort to prevent and respond to wandering among individuals with Alzheimer's, Dementia, Autism, and other cognitive impairments. This report provides an update on the major L.A. Found accomplishments since our June 2021 report. Key updates include:

**Project Lifesaver (PL) Pilot**

- To date, over 900 bracelets have been issued, more than 90% of our goal to issue 1,000 devices.
- We have safely reunited 26 Project Lifesaver participants with their families since L.A. Found began.
- The Quality and Productivity Commission awarded L.A. Found the 2021 Special Merit Plaque for the Project Lifesaver pilot. L.A. Found also received a 2021 achievement award from the National Association of Counties.



## Marketing and Outreach

- In collaboration with IHSS, approximately 700 IHSS Social Workers were trained on L.A. Found and the Project Lifesaver Program.
- L.A. Found was featured in “La Opinion” in September and on Telemundo 52 in November as part of their “*Apoyando a Nuestra Comunidad (Supporting Our Community)*” segment, in celebration of National Family Caregivers Month. The livestream was shared via all Telemundo Social Media platforms.
- In November, also to recognize National Family Caregivers month, we participated in a Spanish radio show, “*La Hora de la Herencia (The Time of Inheritance)*.” The show is broadcast in Lancaster, Palmdale, and the Antelope Valley by the Heritage Sierra Medical Group. The hour-long show was devoted to the L.A. Found Initiative and Project Lifesaver Program to spread awareness among the Latinx community.
- We are expanding outreach and partnerships with agencies that provide case management and support to our target populations. For example, in November, we collaborated with the Home Instead Senior Care agency, based in Pasadena, and provided information about L.A. Found to their case managers and clients. Additionally, we conducted a Facebook and Instagram Live Event earlier this month, targeting their 6,000 social media followers.
- Social Media Outreach continues, providing L.A. Found program information, COVID-19 prevention and safety measures, and vaccine availability information. We are working closely with our community partners to continue sharing valuable information on resources and programs that benefit our participants and caregivers.
- In collaboration with the Los Angeles County Sherriff’s Department and the L.A. Found Taskforce, a 30, 60, and 90 second Public Service Announcement (PSA) was developed and is on target for dissemination early this year. We plan to share the PSA in our social media platforms (L.A. Found and WDACS) and with media outlets. The PSA will inform L.A. County residents about the various resources and highlight the importance of timely reporting to law enforcement when critical missing individuals wander or become lost.

## Alternative Technology

- In October 2021, the first of three (3) GPS tracking devices was issued to ten (10) different Project Lifesaver participants. These individuals will wear a JioBit tracking device along with their Project Lifesaver bracelet to determine which technology is more effective for the family. We are currently working with the second vendor, Yepson, to launch the second GPS device to another group of Project Lifesaver Participants. We

anticipate launching the Yepson device early this year, followed by the third device, iTrack, this Spring.

- In November 2021, the U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Assistance awarded us a second grant (\$150,000) that will be used to further expand the availability of GPS technology to track vulnerable County residents that wander. Efforts to expand GPS technology to eligible participants will begin once the assessment of the current GPS Pilot concludes in 2022.

### **County Staff/First Responder Training**

- We successfully migrated L.A. Found virtual training to the County's new Cornerstone Learning Management System. To date, over 2,461 County employees have completed the virtual training, which consists of five (5) videos that focus on topics such as Project Lifesaver, At-Risk Persons who wander, and identifying individuals with Dementia and Alzheimer's. WDACS is promoting the training to all its staff and is requiring it for staff who work on aging issues.
- The LASD continues using their mobile, Multiple Interactive Learning Objectives (MILO) simulator to train First Responders about the L.A. Found initiative and de-escalation tactics. This interactive training teaches first responders how to deescalate tense situations when interacting with those who have Autism. Key elements of this training can also be applied to individuals with Dementia. To date, the LASD has provided this training to 4,400 First Responders.

### **L.A. Found Taskforce**

- We continue convening the monthly L.A. Found Taskforce meetings, comprised of key internal and external stakeholders who provide their input and expertise on L.A. Found implementation activities and strategies.
- Taskforce members have been working on several subcommittees in areas such as communication, outreach, and program guidelines. As a result of their efforts, we have enhanced our collaborative relationships with community agencies, revised the Project Lifesaver application, and continue spreading awareness about L.A. Found.
- Additionally, Taskforce members have connected with the Regional Centers to find ways to collaborate and expand program awareness among individuals with autism and developmental disabilities, including a presentation to the Long Beach Aging Services Coalition. The Taskforce is also establishing a subcommittee to focus on outreach opportunities throughout L.A. County.

## **NEXT STEPS**

### **Marketing and Outreach**

Marketing and Outreach continue as key priorities to promote awareness among families and caregivers. In addition to ongoing efforts, we are partnering with the Alzheimer's Association of Southern California to explore how we can further reach and support this vulnerable community.

In collaboration with the 4<sup>th</sup> District, we have been able to connect with the State of California Department of Developmental Services to distribute L.A. Found resources to all Regional Centers located in the Los Angeles area. The goal is to promote the program as a resource to individuals serviced by the Regional Centers.

Additionally, the L.A. Found website will be enhanced to improve the customer experience. Later this year, we plan to refresh the site with a new look and improved content organization.

### **Project Lifesaver Bracelet Distribution**

We continue distributing Project Lifesaver devices to reach our 1,000-device goal, while supporting the need for replacement parts for participants who have been part of the program longer than one (1) year. The Project Lifesaver devices require batteries and sometimes need to be replaced due to malfunction or loss.

### **Funding**

For Fiscal Year (FY) 2021-22 the program budget is \$1.606 million, of which \$1.143 million is comprised of County funding with the remaining \$463,000 coming from other revenue funding sources. The funding will support administrative costs, PL Tracking technology, First Responder Education, and case management services for PL participants. Funding is also allocated for registry services and social service provider education. Through the Community Block Grant from the Los Angeles County Development Authority, L.A. Found received \$65k allocated for communication and outreach efforts.

As we near our goal of issuing 1,000 devices, we will assess the need for ongoing support of existing participants with spare parts and the need for additional Project Lifesaver devices. Once the assessment of the GPS Pilot concludes in 2022, funding from the 2nd DOJ grant (awarded in November 2021) will be utilized to expand GPS technology to eligible County residents.

### **First Responder Training**

The LASD continues offering L.A. Found training to First Responders and Law Enforcement personnel throughout the County.

## **County Liaisons**

In 2019, we established a multidisciplinary team of L.A. Found liaisons comprised of representatives from each County Department. We worked with the liaisons to create a Countywide protocol to respond to cases of missing persons with cognitive impairments, which has been activated more than 250 times to date. We plan to reconvene these liaisons to examine ways to enhance their role and further strengthen the Countywide activation and coordination process in cases of missing persons with cognitive impairments.

## **CONCLUSION**

We look forward to working with your Board, other County Departments, and stakeholders to further enhance L.A. Found and build on our successes. The next report is targeted for June 30, 2022. Should you have questions, please contact me at [osolorzano@wdacs.lacounty.gov](mailto:osolorzano@wdacs.lacounty.gov) or contact Dr. Laura Trejo at [ltrejo@wdacs.lacounty.gov](mailto:ltrejo@wdacs.lacounty.gov).

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