

GRUNION GAZETTE

Long Beach's Favorite Community Newspaper

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Homeless Students Find Help

By SARAH VERS
DAILY 49ER

On the surface, the Cal State Long Beach campus is an idyllic home of happy students pursuing an education. But a closer look reveals a more complex, troubling reality — homeless students.

For Anette Alvarez, her situation escalated before she had a chance to catch her breath. One day she was able to support herself while focusing on school at CSULB, and the next she was calling up friends to see if she could sleep on their couches.

One in five students at CSULB are in need of food, and one in 10 are in need of housing, according to research by Rashida Crutchfield, CSULB assistant professor in the school of social work.

The Student Emergency Intervention and Wellness Program combats these emergency situations by targeting students with housing and food insecurities to immediately serve some of the most at-risk students on campus.

"I was facing a situation where I was completely homeless and I was using my friends' places, but it wasn't long-term, and I didn't have resources to get food or
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HAUTE DOG SERENADE



—Gazette photo by Geronimo Quitoriano

More than 500 dogs, plus owners and spectators, packed Marina Vista Park Sunday for the 17th annual Haute Dog Howl'oween Parade.

DA Says No To Charges For Pearce

By HARRY SALTZGAVER
EXECUTIVE EDITOR

No criminal charges will be filed against Second District Councilwoman Jeannine Pearce, according to a statement from the Long Beach Police Department, but accusations of alleged inappropriate activity and conflicts of interest still are being reviewed by the Los Angeles District Attorney's Office.

The LBPd conducted a criminal investigation regarding allegations of domestic battery and driving under the influence against Pearce, Sgt. Brad Johnson said Wednesday in a release. The investigation stemmed from an incident early June 3, when Pearce and then-chief of staff Devin Cotter were contacted near a 710 Freeway onramp by California Highway Patrol officers.

Pearce and Cotter both were released and allowed to go home after LBPd officers had arrived and investigated. A separate confrontation later that morning resulted in Cotter's arrest on public intoxication and a failure to appear warrant for an earlier driving under the influence charge. Both people apparently made accusations of domestic battery against the other.

City Prosecutor Doug Haubert was giving
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Mia Shows Counseling Works

By HARRY SALTZGAVER
EXECUTIVE EDITOR

"Mia had always been an outgoing, happy little girl," Araceli Regnier said. "So when she started to pull back and go quiet, I knew something was wrong."

Mia Regnier was 7 years old, and had recently recovered from a severe stomach virus. Her mom said Mia exhibited all the signs of anxiety, so she decided to ask the Guidance Center for help.

"I went to the Guidance Center before," Araceli said, "and they really helped me. I had talked to her teachers and principal, and decided Mia could get help here."

The Guidance Center, based in Long Beach, is a nonprofit focusing on children's mental health. They serve about 3,000 youngsters a year at the headquarters at 1301 Pine Ave., a partnership with the Long Beach Unified School District and satellite offices in Compton and San Pedro.



—Gazette photo by Harry Saltzgaver

CONFIDENCE SHOWS. Mia Regnier talks about how she helps her classmates with anxiety and other issues.

Mia started sessions with Gloria, (she didn't know her last name), and it was discovered Mia was afraid to eat, causing anxiety. Using relaxation techniques, including a stress-reducing rubber duck, Mia began opening up again.

Then she started getting bullied in school.

"We had to pump her up, tell her we can help her become strong," Araceli said. "Every day when I picked her up, there were tears. Then one day she said she was being bullied, and she wanted it to stop."

Using techniques learned at The Guidance Center, and with help from teachers and the principal at Alvarado Elementary School, Araceli and Mia began coping with the girl doing the bullying. Mia focused on seeing something happy when she saw the bully, so she didn't get scared. "One day, my friends were behind her and she didn't know it," Mia said. "I waved at them, and she was like, 'me?' Then I ran right past her to my friends."

Since that breakthrough, Mia has become a successful, outgoing leader again. She ran for and won election as secretary of the
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Libraries Haven Of Internet Deprived

By ASHLEIGH RUHL
CONTRIBUTOR

Editor's note: An experiment in journalism teamwork, the Long Beach Media Collaborative is made up of participants from the Press-Telegram, Long Beach Post, Grunion Gazette, and Long Beach Business Journal. The goal: To combine forces for in-depth, multi-platform reporting on poignant issues gripping the community. Our first project, Strengthening the Signal, explores the dearth of internet access in some corners of the city — and mines potential solutions for bridging the gap.

Walk just a few feet inside the Long Beach Public Library's Main Branch on a typical afternoon, and you'll find a person at nearly every computer termi-



nal — watching videos, sending emails, monitoring their social media accounts, playing games, shopping and browsing the library's card catalog.

Several folks take off their shoes and spread out their belongings, planning to stay awhile. They are as comfortable here as they are in their own living rooms. And that's the point.

With nearly 16% of Long Beach residents living without residential internet service, the branch libraries have become a home away from home for thousands of people. The Main
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INSIDE
YOUR
GRUNION



TIME TO FALL BACK

It's time to set your clocks back one hour. Daylight Saving Time ends at 2 a.m. Sunday. Enjoy the extra hour of sleep. We will be on Pacific Standard Time until 2 a.m. Sunday, March 11, 2018, when the clocks spring ahead again.

COLUMNS

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Pearce, DA

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en the domestic violence investigation in July, but sent it on to the DA's office to avoid any appearance of a conflict of interest. A spokesman for the District Attorney's office said there were two investigations into Pearce and the incident — one criminal and the other in its Public Integrity Division.

In the announcement, Johnson said the LBPd had received a document Oct. 20 from the DA's office saying they were declining to prosecute the criminal charges. But because the Public Integrity investigation and Cotter's public intoxication case were both still active, documents related to the LBPd investigation were not available, and would stay sealed until the cases were resolved.

Last Thursday, a charge evaluation worksheet from the District Attorney's office was made public, citing specific actions June 3 that would make it difficult if not impossible to prosecute the domestic violence or driving under the influence charges. They include lack of confirmation that a breath analysis machine was accurate and conflicting stories from Pearce and Cotter.

That document also said a dating relationship had been estab-

lished between Pearce and Cotter, and that Cotter had suffered visible injuries that night.

"CHP officers' observations of suspect Pearce's damaged property strewn on the roadway and of the text suspect Pearce sent to he new chief of staff requesting help, along with video evidence showing victim yelling that he will reveal disparaging information about suspect Pearce to the press, her husband, and her employer if she did not meet certain demands while holding her car keys, support suspect Pearce's final statement..." the worksheet says. "Thus, based on the totality of the evidence presented, the prosecution cannot prove that the force suspect Pearce used was not appropriate for the situations that she was facing at the time."

The form also states the LBPd officers smelled alcohol on Pearce, but waited until 4 a.m. to administer a field sobriety test and a breathalyzer test. Police did not administer a second breathalyzer test, and the machine used later was shown to be malfunctioning.

While the district attorney's office declined to file charges, the report caused a group circulating a recall petition to call for Pearce's immediate resignation.

"While the information released last night in no way re-

solves the separate corruption investigation being conducted by the D.A.'s Public Integrity Division into Pearce and former chief of staff Devin Cotter, and while Pearce has escaped charges stemming from her behavior during the hours after midnight on June 3, 2017, we now know more than

enough to justify a collective call by the civic leaders of Long Beach for Pearce's resignation," the group said in a press release. "We, the Recall Committee, demand her immediate resignation."

The release did not offer an update on the recall petition drive.

Last week, Pearce told the

Long Beach Press-Telegram that she was thankful this part of the investigation was done, and that she felt some vindication in the district attorney's decision.

"It's been a trying year for everybody involved," she said.

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Guidance

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student council. Her slogan was "1, 2, 3, 4, 5, vote for Mia and you'll never cry."

"The Guidance Center is my best friend," Mia said. "I tell my friends at school that I can help you if you need help. We can hang out or whatever, and it all will be okay."

Today, 10-year-old Mia is part of the school's Tech Club, which provides content for the school's own YouTube channel — Mia gives the weather. She's also into coding and gaming, and says she wants to go to USC to learn how to create games.

She said she also wants to continue being an advocate for The Guidance Center.

"I like to help other people,"

Mia said. "I tell them that it's okay to have anxiety, and that I can help them and support them."

Mia and her mom also have become spokespersons for The Guidance Center as an example of success. Mia will speak at the Nov. 11 Sunset Sip, The Guidance Center's primary fundraiser of the year.

Wine tasting, heavy appetizers, guest speakers including Police Chief Robert Luna and silent and live auctions are on the program. The event starts at 6:30 p.m. Nov. 11 at Hotel Maya.

Tickets start at \$100, and sponsorships (starting at \$500) are still available. For more information and to buy tickets, go to tobit.ly/SUNSETSIP2017 or call (562) 485-2551.

Harry Saltzgaver can be reached at hsalt@gazettes.com.

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