

# **10<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF DIRECTOR OF KERN COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH**

## **MATTHEW CONSTANTINE: FATHER, WORKER, HERO**

By Dnee Sirichantaropas

Matthew Constantine wakes up at 4 a.m. every morning. With inspiration sparking through his fingertips and innovation in his heart, he composes presentations, plans creative work, and writes strategies for new programs. October 2019 will mark his 10<sup>th</sup> year as director of Kern County's Public Health.

"I don't want to miss any opportunities," said 49-year-old Constantine, his eyes twinkling. "Every day I have to do something more." Constantine is from Bakersfield and he went to California State University, Northridge.

As the director of Public Health, Constantine has many responsibilities, such as formulating a public health program and budget, monitoring legislative activities, and many more. He tackles these challenges humbly and gracefully.

"He's a leader of integrity," said Public Information Officer, co-worker, and friend, Michelle Corson. "He thinks outside the box and encourages his employees to do the same with the goal of improving our community."

Constantine is a great listener. He never wants to take the credit for department successes himself but instead wants others to receive credit and praise. He arrives to work early and never really stops working, even when at home, according to Corson.

Constantine is a “phenomenal” boss and a successful father of three. And although a quiet and private person, Constantine radiates warmth and kindness to the people around him.

“He’s my hero,” said his oldest son, Joe Constantine. “He inspires me to get up and go to work each day.” “He always seems to have time for us,” Joe added. Joe has adopted many of his father’s best qualities including being patient, kind, and hardworking. Joe recalled old summer days spent in the garage, woodworking and climbing the roof to help his dad fix things. Constantine’s children are grown up and spread throughout the United States, and he still keeps up with them a couple of times a week.

Although Constantine dives deep into the depths of his work, he has always managed to balance his work and home life for 25 years by not defining what “work life” and “home life” means. “I think of [work life and family life] as artificial boundaries,” Constantine said. “I enjoy mixing the two together.” Constantine plays soccer with his co-workers, friends, and family on Mondays.

According to his wife, Jennifer Constantine, he is a “dedicated public servant who really wants to make Kern County a better place.”

Constantine has worked on various campaigns such as

- Certified Healthy
- Food Safety School

- Mobile Health Clinic
- I Pink I Can (for breast cancer awareness)
- Safe Eats on Kern County Streets
- Worksite Wellness Program
- Insurance billing project
- Risk-based health inspection
- Performance Incentive Program to give permit fee money back for high performing facilities, and many more.

“I love being able to give back and make a difference,” said Constantine. “I look forward to coming to work every day.”

Constantine has had many opportunities that led him to where he is now, but the most important thing about him is this: he works really hard. His 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of being director commemorates his persevering, diligent work.

“There’s not a pill, not a magic potion, but almost everything can be solved by kindness and hard work.”