

To: **Alfredo Mendoza:** Staff Services Analyst, Department of Workforce Investment
From: **Rebecca Lincoln:** Career Educator, Merced County Office of Education
Re: **Merced County Youth Council Quarterly Report-** Empower Program
Date: **February 2009** (October, November and December 2008)

A. Overall status of the program:

There are presently 116 active participants in EMPOWER at the end of the second quarter; this past quarter the program had eleven (11) new enrollments and five(5) exits. The Empower advisors continue to track the number of participants enrolled in structured program activities to ensure that the majority of youth are receiving intensive services, as opposed to case management services. The status on WIA-Client action reports for goals, activities, exits and follow-ups (phase II) remain up to date.

B. Past Quarter Highlights:

- 1) **EMPOWER Workshops:** The EMPOWER Workshops were provided to youth in the month of November this quarter. The following is an accounting of workshops offered and numbers attended:
 - a) **EMPOWER Orientation:** Conducted on Friday November 7th had an attendance of sixteen youth;
 - b) **EMPOWER Workshop I:** ‘*Gettin’ Ready for the Job*’ conducted on Friday, November 14th had seventeen (17) youth in attendance;
 - c) **EMPOWER Workshop II:** ‘*The Real Game California*’ was conducted on November 17th, 19th & 21st had an average attendance of fifteen (15) participants per session;
 - d) **EMPOWER Workshop III:** ‘*Gettin’ a Job*’ was conducted on December 1st, 3rd & 4th had an average of fifteen (15) participants per session

- 2) **Bldg K-Computer Lab:** EMPOWER participants use the computer lab daily to work on résumés, portfolios, and conduct job search. *PLATO* is educational software designed to increase math and reading skills, it is also available to the participants in the computer lab. Sign-in sheets are used to track the number of participants using the computer lab daily.

- 3) **The Opportunity Club** is an ongoing activity that provides monthly sessions on current jobs, educational, community, and leadership opportunities, as well as information regarding life skills for EMPOWER and YOP youth in Merced County. All YOP and EMPOWER participants are encouraged to attend these meetings.

On October 29th, thirty-two (32) YOP and EMPOWER participants attended a presentation called “Inside Merced Gangs” presented by Mr. Sam Rangel, co-founder of “Distinguish Outreach Services,

a national speaker and educator on early warnings signs of gang involvement . Mr. Rangel shared his own life experiences and provided updated statistics on gangs in Merced.

- 4) Golden Valley High School** – On Wed Oct 15th, EMPOWER staff were asked to provide an overview to over 200 Golden Valley High School seniors on employability preparation for entering the workforce after graduation. The presentation included resume writing tips, proper completion of a job application, interviewing skills, job placement, job retention strategies, and labor market information. Staff also had the opportunity to provide a short promotion on the EMPOWER program.

5) EMPOWER Success Story:



Yuliana Centeno-Terrones enrolled into the EMPOWER Program on June 7th, 2006. When Yuliana started the program, she had many challenges that prevented her from moving forward with her educational goals to become a Medical Assistant. With support from her family and the EMPOWER program, Yuliana completed her class hours and externship in November, 2007. The very next month, she was hired by Dr. Joe Pediatrics in Los Banos as a Medical Assistant full time.

In a recent follow-up visit, Yuliana stated that she is very busy balancing her full time job, raising her two young boys but loves every minute. She has decided that she wants to continue her education to become a Phlebotomist.

C. Past Quarter Deficiencies: none

D. Past Quarter recruiting and marketing efforts:

Marketing and recruiting efforts for EMPOWER are on-going. In the past quarter, staff conducted presentations to The Merced Adult School, Golden Valley High School; Human Services Agency and to Yosemite High School, Independent Studies and Valley Community High School Counselors.

E. Next quarter challenges:

F. Technical assistance needed:

G. Number of clients receiving social services and examples of services received.

Numerous referrals have been made to agencies to assist with food, clothing, housing and transportation.