To: **Eve Snelling:** Staff Services Analyst II, 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 2010** (October, November and December 2009)

A. <u>Overall status of the program:</u>

The EMPOWER program enrolled seventy-one (71) new participants this past quarter; this brings the total to two-hundred and thirty-six (236) active participants in the EMPOWER program. 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. <u>Past Quarter Highlights:</u>

1) **EMPOWER Workshops:** The EMPOWER Workshops were provided to youth in the months of October and December. The following is an accounting of workshops offered and numbers attended:

   a) **EMPOWER Orientation**: Conducted on Thursday, October 22 and December 3 with an average of fifty-three (53) in attendance per session;

   b) **EMPOWER Workshop I**: **'*Gettin' Ready for the Job'*** conducted on Friday, October 23 and December 4 with an average of forty (40) in attendance per session;

   c) **EMPOWER Workshop II**: '*The Real Game California'* was conducted on October 26, 28, & 30 and double sessions conducted on December 7, 9, 10, and 11 with an average attendance of thirty-three (33) participants per session;

   d) **EMPOWER Workshop III**: '*Gettin' a Job'* was conducted on November 2, 4, and 6 and double sessions conducted on December 14, 15, 16, 17, and 18 with an average of thirty-four (34) participants per session.

2) **Wolfe Center- Bldg D-3 Computer Lab:** EMPOWER participants use the computer lab daily to work on résumés, portfolios, and to conduct job search. *PLATO* is educational software designed to increase math and reading skills. Sign-in sheets are used to track the number of participants using the computer lab daily.

3) EMPOWER Updated Success Story:

Luis Araujo entered the Empower Program on June 19, 2007, a nineteen year old high school graduate who had attended Merced College for a short time, and had very little work experience. Luis dealt with on-going issues and challenges, but he never lost sight of his goal to become an attorney.

Luis had some challenges with the justice system; he needed a fingerprint clearance to start his Empower work experience. Luis and his advisor spent hours on phones calls, sending emails, and even sent letters to the local Superior Court. All the time and attention to these problems helped to successfully clear all court related issues and Luis could now receive his fingerprint clearance. Luis was placed at a worksite here at MCOE's Media Center; assisting staff, stocking shelves, and learning computer programs. Luis also returned to Merced College to earn an associate's degree.

Update: In December of 2007, Luis completed his last semester at Merced College and was accepted to attend California State University at Stanislaus for the spring semester. As a student at Stanislaus State, Luis joined a mentoring program and worked with youth with similar problems he had encountered as a youth. Luis was anxious and excited to be a part of this program. It was a project that gave him a feeling of gratification, because he was able to reach out to young people.

In December2009, Luis graduated with a Bachelors of Science in Criminal Justice at California State University at Stanislaus. He plans to continue his education by earning a Master's Degree. In the mean time, Luis will be working at the Merced County Probation Department.

4) EMPOWER *Updated Success Story*:

When Javier joined the EMPOWER program in the fall of 2006, he found Empower to be immediately useful. He didn't have a computer or the Internet at home, so he found the computer labs to be useful in his college search. After attending all the workshops and assigned to an EMPOWER Advisor, Javier shared his dream to attend UC Merced. The EMPOWER advisor encouraged Javier to visit UC Student Body President, Josh Franco; who in turn referred Javier to a counselor and admissions person on campus. Javier was accepted as a student of Merced UC and attended his first class January 12, 2007.

Update: Javier is thankful to the EMPOWER Program for encouraging him through powerful motivation to pursue the financial aid issues and setting him up with the right people at UC Merced. Now, in his 2nd year, he is working towards a Political Science degree. Javier has a job with the student government as a Student Lobby Director for the Associated Students of UC Merced (ASUCM) and acts as a community organizer. He arranges attendance to conferences and hold organized rallies. Javier loves UC Merced's political atmosphere and finds his classes and student government job to be challenging and engaging.

Javier is fulfilling another dream, to travel as a member of various clubs and organizations, He went to Santa Cruz with the University of California Students Association (UCSA), to Colorado with the United States Students Association (USSA) and went to a 2008 Barack Obama Rally in Las Vegas with the UC Merced Democrats Club. Javier is studying abroad in Budapest, Hungary for the Spring Semester of 2010. He's really excited, because he's never been out of the country before. Javier hopes to study in Washington DC as part of the UCDC program when he returns from his studies in Hungary.

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 and Central Valley Regional Center.

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.