

TO: WIB

DATE: 5/12/11

THROUGH: WIB Staff

For Discussion

FROM: Rebecca Lincoln, MCOE Staff

For Action

For Information

**SUBJECT: EMPOWER Program- Program Year 1011: 3rd Quarter Report
(January, February, March)**

PROPOSED MOTION(S): For Information Only

DISCUSSION:

A. Overall status of the program:

The EMPOWER program enrolled sixteen new participants this past quarter; this brings the total active to one-hundred and fifty-five (155) EMPOWER participants. 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).

B. Past Quarter Highlights:

- 1) **EMPOWER Workshops:** The EMPOWER Workshops were provided to youth in the past quarter. All the EMPOWER Workshops were conducted at the MCOE Wolfe Educational Center. The following is an accounting of the workshops offered:
 - a) **EMPOWER Orientation:** was conducted on Friday, January 14th, 2011
 - b) **EMPOWER Workshop I:** ‘*Gettin’ Ready for the Job*’ was conducted on Friday, 21st, 2011;
 - c) **EMPOWER Workshop II:** ‘*The Real Game California*’ was conducted on January 24th, 26th, and 28th 2011;
 - d) **EMPOWER Workshop III:** ‘*Gettin’ a Job*’ was conducted on January 31st, February 2nd and February 4th, 2011.

- 2) **Wolfe Center- Bldg D-3 Computer Lab:** The Wolfe Center computer lab is available for EMPOWER participants to use daily to update résumés, portfolios, and conduct job searches. *PLATO*, educational software designed to increase math and reading skills, as well as GED

preparation, 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

- 3) **California Workforce Association 2011 Youth Conference “ Our Time Our Voice”** was held on January 18-20, 2011 at the Renaissance Long Beach Hotel, in Long Beach, CA. YOP/EMPOWER staff , as well as participants from the YOP, EMPOWER, and Green Job Corp programs attended the three-day conference that was designed to bring together almost 400 attendees, including staff from youth serving agencies, educators working with special populations, youth program designers, managers, policy makers, and youth involved in youth development programs.

The headlines are full of stories about the economic crisis, the dismal low employment rate of all youth, and the even lower employment rate of minority youth. We see few special programs addressing this structural problem, nor little mention of the devastating and lasting impact that this will have on the current generation. For that reason, the theme this year “Our Voice Our Time” is to have our “youth serving community” spend time thinking about what else they can do to both call attention to this problem and help them do a better job helping youth in the current economy.

4) **EMPOWER Success Story: Elizabeth Rodriguez**



Elizabeth enrolled into the Empower Program in September of 2009. At that time, Liz was homeless. She moved between her mother’s apartment and her sister’s home. Elizabeth was unsure of what she wanted to do when she first came into the program, but expressed an interest in the Medical Assistant at Merced College. The advisor reviewed her objective assessment results and it did not appear

Elizabeth had an interest in Medical Assisting or the Medical Field. The initial goal plan was to give her work experience so she can afford to have money for college and to help at home. She needed to become independent and be able to take care of herself, so she drew up a new ‘plan of action” that would enable her success in finding a job and able to support herself. The advisor offered her work experience so she could have some income to assist her in finding a place to live.

The next steps for Liz were to review her assessment results to see what might best suit her interests and goals. Liz wanted to work in retail and was placed at Walgreens in Merced as her work site.

Elizabeth displayed excellent work ethics and was hired right away. Now with employment, she has gained income, her California ID, security and independence, and she has secured an apartment for her mother, brother and herself. They share the rent and Liz is doing really well at work and in her personal life. At this time, Liz is living alone with her daughter and enjoying the independence Empower has allowed her. Liz is a true success story. She is very grateful to the Empower Program for getting her off to a great start in her life.

5) **EMPOWER Success Story: Benjamin Mariano**



Benjamin enrolled into the Empower program after he successfully completed the AARA summer work program. He was unsure about his future and needed assistance with his goals. While in the program, Benjamin participated in the Employability and Real Game workshops. He learned how to make use of the computer to create his resume and also learned how to navigate the internet. Benjamin expressed his passion for landscaping. Benjamin had some landscaping experience from his high school days when he was enrolled in the Work Place Learning Academy. His advisor put him to work with Yard Masters where he learned the operation of a landscaping business. After successfully completing his work hours with Yard Masters, Benjamin was inspired to start his own landscaping business. He was unsure where to start and how to start, so he received advice that he should start handing out fliers and see if he receives any calls. To his surprise, he received quite a few calls because his prices were so affordable. His advisor also helped him with his fliers and even connected him to businesses to have his own business cards printed. Ben also took initiative to apply for a business license with the City of Merced, which he was granted.

Ben is currently operating his business and has built a list of loyal customers because he is a hard working young man and shows great pride in his work. If you were to witness Ben working, it would be evident that he doing what he loves.

C. Past Quarter Deficiencies: none reported

D. Past Quarter recruiting and marketing efforts:

Program participants continue to be our greatest source of recruiting and marketing.

E. Next Quarter challenges: none reported

F. Technical Assistance needed: none reported

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.

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FROM: Rebecca Lincoln, MCOE Staff

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**SUBJECT: Youth Opportunity Program (YOP) - Program Year 1011: 3rd Quarter Report
(January, February, March)**

PROPOSED MOTION(S): For Information Only

DISCUSSION:

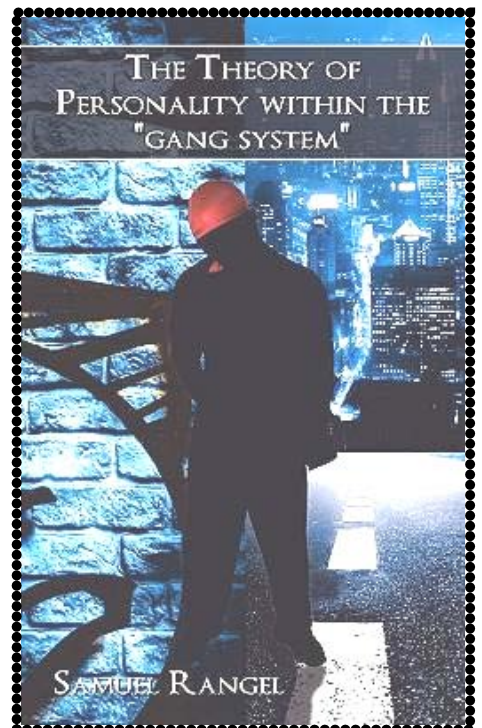
A. Overall status of the program:

There were 328 (three hundred and twenty-eight) active participants served in the Youth Opportunity Program (YOP) in the second quarter. The WIA-YOP Client action reports for goals, activities, exits and follow-ups (phase II) remain up to date and YOP Mentors 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.

B. Past Quarter Highlights:

1) Guest Speaker: Sam Rangel

Guest Speaker Author and Gang Prevention Specialists Sam Rangel spoke to the YOP students on February 23rd, 2011 at 6:00pm in the Merced Valley Community School gym where 80 participants were in attendance. Sam's presentation addressed 'Gangs in Merced' and his expert advice on how to stay in school and away from the gang life. Students heard stories of gang violence and life on the streets of Merced. Sam generously shared his earlier life as a gang leader and emphasized how he recruited the youngest of our school children. Students responded with questions and comments. Some of the questions asked were, "How did you get to where you are today"? "How many gangs are in Merced"? Sam



answered each question and gave his opinion of why gang life has infiltrated Merced.

The students gave comments after the presentation, and they expressed how much they did not know about gang life including a comment about how hard it is to believe gang members go after 5th and 6th graders. This presentation proved to have valuable information for the YOP students.

2) **SMASHED Presentation**

The YOP/BTS participants attended a presentation of 'Smashed' on Thursday, March 24, 2011.

Smashed was created using video material outlining the dangers of drinking and driving. The



video was vivid in showing the outcomes of driving drunk and the impact on the students was astounding. There was wonderful conversation and discussion after the video.

Participants also viewed AT&T's 10-minute documentary titled "The Last Text," featuring stories of real individuals whose lives were adversely affected by texting behind the wheel.

AT&T created this documentary as part of its "It Can Wait" campaign because they want consumers to be safe while using technology. The stories are true from real accidents, told by real people. The main purpose of the video is to let youth know that whatever they have to say in a text can wait!

Students were then introduced to the 'Fatal Vision' Goggles which simulate having an alcohol level of 0.80. They had the opportunity to see just how it feels to be drunk. We had participants "Walk the Line" and play a simple game of catch. The participants left with valuable information and visions of the real dangers of using alcohol and driving and the dangers of texting while driving. Hopefully we save a life or two!



C. **Past Quarter Deficiencies:** None reported

D. **Past Quarter recruiting/marketing efforts:**

The program's philosophy is to enroll students in the first semester in order to provide services during the school year and make the summer work opportunity an incentive for year round participation by youth.

E. **Next Quarter challenges:** None reported

F. **Technical Assistance needed:** None reported