

**TO: Youth Council**

**DATE: 05/10/06**

**FROM: Youth Council Staff**

**For Action**

**For Information**

**For Discussion**

**SUBJECT: EMPOWER Quarterly Report**

**PROPOSED MOTION(S): Information Only**

**DISCUSSION: EMPOWER Quarterly Report, Jan, Feb, Mar 2006 is attached.**

**ATTACHMENT(S): EMPOWER Quarterly Report**

To: Dave Davis: Special Projects Manager, Department of Workforce Investment  
From: Rebecca Lincoln: Career Educator, Merced County Office of Education  
Re: Merced County Youth Council Quarterly Report- EMPOWER Program  
Date: April, 2006 for the quarter ending March 31, 2006

**A. Overall status of the program:**

The EMPOWER program enrolled an additional 13 (thirteen) and exited 25 (twenty-five) participants this quarter for a total number 255 active EMPOWER participants. The EMPOWER advisors continue to track the number of participants enrolled in structured program activities to ensure the majority of the youth are receiving intensive services ( as opposed to case management services). Status on all WIA-Client Action reports for goals, activities, exits, and follow-ups show continued improvement and are up to date.

**B. Past Quarter Highlights:**

**1) EMPOWER Workshops:**

This quarter the EMPOWER program added two new workshops to the series of workshops offered. **Workshop II** is renamed "*The Real Game California*" and **Workshop IV** is called "*Keepin the Job*"; **Workshop I** is renamed "*Gettin' Ready for the Job*" and **Workshop III** is called "*Gettin' a Job*". EMPOWER Workshops are provided on an every other month basis. The following is an accounting of workshops offered and number attended:

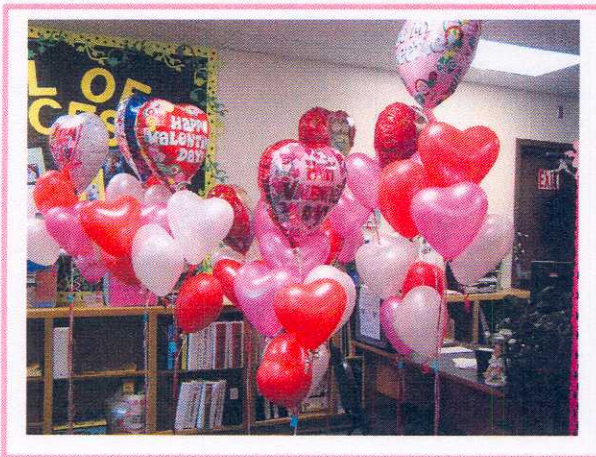
- a) **EMPOWER Orientation:** Conducted on the second Friday in the months of January, and March; on the average 25 participants attended each session;
- b) **EMPOWER Workshop I:** "*Gettin' Ready for the Job*" Conducted on the third Friday in the months of January and March; on the average 15 participants attend each session;
- c) **EMPOWER Workshop II:** "*The Real Game California*" was conducted in January and March with an average attendance of 15 participants per session;
- d) **EMPOWER Workshop III:** "*Gettin' a Job*" was conducted in the months of January, and March where participants complete an ROP employability portfolio and practiced interviewing techniques; average attendance was 12-15 per session.
- e) **EMPOWER Workshop IV:** "*Keepin' the Job*" was implemented on March 12<sup>th</sup>, 2006 with six in attendance.

**2) Bldg K-Computer Lab:** EMPOWER participants use the computer lab daily to work on résumés, portfolios, and conduct job search. Ed Souza, an adult school teacher, is available for six hours per week in the computer lab to assist EMPOWER participants with PLATO 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) Opportunity Club** is an ongoing activity that provides bi-monthly sessions on current job, educational, community, and leadership opportunities, as well as information regarding life skills for EMPOWER and YOP youth in Merced County. All participants are invited and encouraged to attend. A special session was held on January 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2006 at the MCOE campus where 25 high school students viewed the HBO Documentary *Smashed- Toxic Tales of Teens and Alcohol*. The presenter, Cyndie Bray, an EMPOWER Career Educator from Merced Office of Education, asked provoking questions after the video to our participants regarding the dangers of drinking and driving. Pre and post surveys are given to provide feedback for future sessions. Most participants

tell us they come away with a different outlook on the dangers of drinking, driving and partying in general. Due to illness, the meeting in March was cancelled.

- 4) **Working Professional Curriculum Update:** The EMPOWER staff continues to work on the revisions for the ROP Working Professional course outline that is the framework for all EMPOWER workshops, work experience activities, and the locally approved youth credential. In the past quarter staff met to update the ESLR and State Alignments to the new course outline. This alignment process will assure that the Working Professional Credential awarded is based on rigorous state standards. Additional tasks included updating the ROP Working Professional program brochures for both high school and adult students. Staff updated and revised twenty-five (25) training plans that will be used in the community classroom and developed a 4-step lesson plan; all the new developments will be presented and brought before the Advisory Committee for approval on April 6<sup>th</sup>, 2006.
- 5) **March of Dimes Valentine Bouquet fundraiser:** This quarter, EMPOWER/YOP Programs decided to raise money to help support research for the prevention of premature births. Merced County Office of Education Empower and YOP Programs held a Valentine Balloon Bouquet fundraiser on February 14<sup>th</sup>, 2006. High energy volunteering by thirty (30) participants and ten staff members produced the goal of selling 80 balloon bouquets! The money raised will be added to the anticipated Car Wash to be held on May 13 at Merced Union High School. The YOP and Empower program goal for this year is \$1000.00! Please support the fundraiser by purchasing a car wash ticket during our presale, the week of May 1<sup>st</sup> thru May 6<sup>th</sup>. On May 6<sup>th</sup>, Empower and YOP participants will be gathering at Applegate Park in Merced for the big **WalkAmerica** wearing T-shirts printed with the EMPOWER and YOP logos. Please join us.



- 6) **California Workforce Association Sixth Annual Youth Conference: *THE ADVENTURE CONTINUES*** was the theme for this years CWA Conference held on January 17<sup>th</sup> -19<sup>th</sup>, 2006 in Orange County, CA. EMPOWER staff attended the three-day conference that was designed to help local Youth Providers, Youth councils and policy makers run better programs, connect to other systems, and learn about innovative strategies for youth. It was a great time to meet and network with individuals from throughout the state, attended workshops and an opportunity to hear the inspirational Father Gregory J. Boyle, Director of Jobs for Future and Homeboy Industries.

7) **A tour to the new Merced County Juvenile Hall** was available on March 6, 2006. Three EMPOWER advisors, Rebecca Garcia, Roberto Rivera and Blanca Rodriguez along with MCOE ROP teachers attended. The state constructed this 20-bed juvenile hall and related support space at the Merced Juvenile Justice Center. This facility replaced the 53-year-old, 48-bed juvenile hall (net gain of 72 beds). The facility managers gave a tour and an overview of the services provided. Half of the complex is for long term commitments (3 to 6 months) and the other half is for those waiting to go through the court process. There is a full time school at the facility being run by Valley Community School. The school principal, Daphne Post, gave an overview of the type of classes offered. Youth being held at the juvenile hall attend classes Monday through Friday. They also have elective classes including life skills and woodwork. The classes are small and students have access to computers for their school work. The credits earned are transferable to the regular campus. There are plans to expand the type of classes and activities offered, to include landscaping and gardening, as well as joint projects with UC Merced.

8) **Success Story:**

Betzabe enrolled into the Empower Program in July, 2003. She found some job leads in office occupations but didn't have the skills to qualify. She discussed this with her Empower Advisor and it was recommended that she attend the Empower Program Job Readiness Workshop and learn job search and interviewing techniques. She attended all of the Empower Workshops recommended by her Advisor. After completing the Empower Workshops she participated in the Empower Zone and received a Gold Medal. Betzabe set a meeting with her advisor to discuss possible training programs that would be a good fit for her. Betzabe at her advisor's recommendation did career search and decided that Office Technology Training I & II would be a good fit. Betzabe continued to have an excellent attitude, was punctual, she had good attendance, performance and appearance throughout her training. After completion of classroom training, she started her externship at Valley Los Banos High School. She received a Certificate of Excellence from her R.O.P. Instructor and continued to work hard in her position at Valley High School. Then on April 3, 2006, Betzabe was hired as a full time employee at Merced County Office of Education, Valley Los Banos High School. Congratulations!



- 9) **Quarterly EMPOWER.** Partners meeting was not held this past quarter. Partners agreed that a meeting was not needed.
- 10) **EMPOWER Focus Group** meeting was conducted on March 26<sup>th</sup>, with EMPOWER program participants to discuss and provide feedback on the development of Workshop II called *The Real Game California*.
- 11) **Case Management Training** for EMPOWER advisors and support staff was held on March 21<sup>st</sup> 2006. The training included a review on what should be documented in participants file each month.
- 12) **Stakeholders training of Youth-Serving Professionals:** EMPOWER staff attended training facilitated by Nora Gerber on January 12<sup>th</sup>, 2006 at the UC Cooperative Extension in Merced. The training focused on what youth services and contracted programs are available in the community of Merced and surrounding communities to avoid the potential for duplication of services and programs in Merced County.

**C. Past Quarter Deficiencies:** none

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

Recruiting efforts for EMPOWER were limited. EMPOWER program staff dispersed brochures at the Merced County Job Fair held on March 29, at the Merced County Fairgrounds

**E. Next quarter challenges:**

**F. Technical assistance needed:**

Training on WIA Common Measures Policy will be available on May 5<sup>th</sup>, 2006 at MCOE, Bldg M.

**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.