

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-** Younger Youth Program
Date: **May 2007** (January, February, and March 2007)

A. Overall status of the program:

There are presently 154 active participants in the Youth Opportunity Program at the end of the third quarter; there were 24 new enrollments and no exits. The 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). The status on all WIA-Client action reports on goals, activities, exits and follow-ups (phase II) remain up to date.

B. Past quarter highlights:

1) Career Industry Day Events in 2007-2008: These ROP sponsored events provide youth with detailed information and exploration of specific career pathways. Career Industry Days include tours of local businesses, guest speaker presentations, and hands-on activities related to various careers within a pathway. Career Industry Days are held from 8:30 am to 2:00 pm at the Merced County Fair Grounds in the Exhibit Building. The YOP Mentors are encouraged to invite those participants whose career goals or technical training aligned with these pathways. The following career days were attended by our participants:

- Careers in Education held on Wednesday, January 30, 2008
- Careers in Agriculture (at the World Ag. Expo in Tulare) on February 14, 2008
- Careers in Health held on Thursday, March 6, 2008.

2) The Opportunity Club: This is an ongoing activity that provides 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 YOP and EMPOWER participants are encouraged to attend these meetings.

A meeting was held on February 21st, 2008; thirty-three participants attended from throughout the county to view 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.

3) **California Workforce Association Eighth Annual Youth Conference** was held January 15- 17, 2008 at the Renaissance Long Beach Hotel, in Long Beach, CA. YOP & EMPOWER staff attended the three-day conference that was designed to help local Youth Providers, Youth Councils members and policy makers run better programs, connect to other systems, and learn about the latest innovative strategies for youth. Workshop topics included “*Moving Youth beyond Gang Life*”, “*Community Collaboration for Foster Youth*” and updated information was available on Youth Common Measures.

4) **Los Banos Valley Community High School** hosted a Career Fair for Valley students and YOP participants to expose them to opportunities available to them after high school. Representatives from the local community, The Youth Opportunity Program, Head Start, Merced County WorkNet, Los Banos Memorial Hospital, U.S. National Guard, Central Valley Opportunity Center, Los Banos Fire Department and local law enforcement were present to answer questions and distribute brochures and information on careers and jobs in these field of interests.

5) **YOP Success Story :**



Gabriela Vargas graduated from Le Grand High School in June, 2007. She was enrolled in the Youth Opportunity Program since her junior year (2005) at Le Grand. The first summer of YOP work experience, she worked at the Granada Head Start in Planada. On her second year of work experience, she asked to be placed at JAMBA Juice. When the six week program ended, the manager at JAMBA Juice hired her and she has been working there since. Gabriela is now

attending Merced College while working at JAMBA Juice. She is a very hard worker and an excellent role model.

C. Past quarter deficiencies: none

D. Past quarter recruiting/marketing efforts:

Recruiting efforts for the Youth Opportunity Program are limited. The contract specified that as participants exit, new participants will be enrolled in the following quarter after exits, upon availability of funds.

E. Next quarter challenges:

F. Technical assistance needed: WIA Common Measures Training is scheduled on August 20, on the Merced County Office of Education Campus