

TO: Youth Council

DATE: 09/13/06

FROM: Youth Council Staff

For Action

For Information

For Discussion

SUBJECT: April – June 2006 YOP Quarterly Report

PROPOSED MOTION(S): Information only.

DISCUSSION: See attached.

ATTACHMENT(S): April – June YOP 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- **Younger Youth Program**
Date: August 2006 for the quarter ending June 30, 2006

A. Overall status of the program:

In the fourth quarter, nine (9) additional participants were enrolled into the Youth Opportunity Program; this brought the number of total active YOP participants to 389. Ninety-five percent (95%) of basic skills, work readiness, and/or occupational goals were attained. 100% of the participants exited this quarter earned their high school diploma.

B. Past quarter highlights:

- 1) The **YOP summer employment** component began on June 5, 2006; approximately 120 participants worked this summer with local employers. Mentors met with site supervisors to develop training plans for the participants who worked up to 32 hours per week. *The Real Game California* was an 18 hour course taught to all the participants in the first week of the summer component. By participating in *The Real Game California*, participants discovered the importance of education and life-long learning. The course gives participants the tools and experience to help them make realistic and informative choices to meet their career goals.
- 2) **“Exit Strategies”** training was provide for EMPOWER and YOP Staff by Mr. Rick Record from the State Employment Development Department on May 5, 2006. The training concentrated on ‘exit strategies’ to maximize positive outcomes and discussion on post-exit strategies. The training included an introductory discussion on the ‘Making Common Sense of Youth Common Measures’; common measures outcomes may be in effect next program year 07-08.
- 3) **Opportunity Club:** The Opportunity Club 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. Sessions are conducted at the MCOE campus and all participants are invited and encouraged to attend. This quarter a meeting was held on April 27, “Healthy

Relationships- good decisions making, how it affects my future” was the topic presented by Celeste Ramos and her staff from the California Health Collaborative – teen pregnancy prevention program. There was a lively discussion with staff and youth that focused on steps to take in the decision making process and how the decisions made today can affect your future.

4) EMPOWER Focus Group meeting was conducted on June 27th where seventeen EMPOWER and YOP participants and program staff discussed how staff can improve services to increase attendance and interest in The Opportunity Club meetings. Recommendations were as followed:

- ❖ Consensus to meet on the third Thursday of each month;
- ❖ Staff to provide a monthly calendar for participants to advise them on dates of upcoming events and meetings, also to provide the calendar on the MCOE website;
- ❖ Field trips to area colleges and University of California campuses ;
- ❖ Opportunity Club becomes an informal student organization. The participants will elect officers, create a mission and vision statement and have by-laws;
- ❖ Participants asked to find additional opportunities to fund-raise;
- ❖ Participants asked to hold club meetings at other high schools in the County.

Next meeting is set for August 24th at the Merced County Office of Education to discuss ways to implement these recommendations and changes.

5) March of Dimes: EMPOWER and YOP students participated in a fund-raising campaign to benefit the March of Dimes. Thirty-four participants walked in the annual Walk-America on May 5th and approximately 50 participants together with staff held a car wash on May 12th at Merced Union High School. The goal to raise \$1000.00 was met.

6) YOP Success Story #1:

Alicia Morales enrolled in the Youth Opportunity Program December 2004. At that time she was trying to stay focused to continue high school and get her diploma. Alicia was enrolled in Independent Studies and she attended class one day a week. Because she was a minor at the time, Alicia had a difficult time obtaining a job to help support herself. She was placed to work here in MCOE’s CAE department. Alicia learned filing, keyboarding and other computer applications such as Word & Excel. Everyday Alicia

had the opportunity to improve her customer service skills with co-workers and other students. Alicia has graduated, and has moved to Modesto and is working in the Safeway Bakery-Deli. She has a good starting wage and full benefits. Alicia even has her own apartment and car.



YOP Success Story #2:

Maria Zendejas, a foster youth and former Atwater High School, enrolled into the YOP program in March of 2004. In the summer of 2004, Maria was placed to work at K-Mart as a sales associate. Maria did a great job and was hired with K-Mart at the end of the summer. Blanca Rodriguez, her mentor, recently learned that Maria was promoted to an assistant manager for the Home Department at K-Mart. Maria shared her joy and excitement with Blanca. She expressed her gratitude by saying, "I could never have done this without the YOP program and the assistance that I received from Blanca." Maria also shared with Blanca that she looks for YOP students when they are placed at K-Mart as a work site, so she can train them and help them. She is very appreciative of the Youth Opportunity Program, and wants to give back by helping our current students.

7) **“SMASHED: Toxic Tales of Teens and Alcohol”**: Cyndie Bray, an EMPOWER Advisor had the opportunity to address the issue of ‘drinking and driving’ at local high schools, and for MCOE Empower & YOP Program participants. A presentation was held for 200 students at Livingston High School, and also held for smaller groups at the CAE Opportunity Club meetings; each student appeared visibly moved by the experience. Before viewing the film “SMASHED: Toxic Tales of Teens and Alcohol”, the students are given a survey to compare after viewing and the knowledge they had on the effects of alcohol consumption.

After the film, there is a discussion on the events of ineffective thinking and actions of young people. Using a pair of ‘Fatal Vision Goggles’™, which simulates having consumed several drinks rendering the person legally drunk; students then experience the effects of alcohol when they are asked to complete simple tasks under the influence. The discussion then takes on a more serious tone when “Jacqui” is introduced; Jacqui is a poster child for drunken driving accidents. She has been tragically burnt in an alcohol related accident. The poster size picture of Jacqueline is startling. The story on Jacqui makes a real impact on the students. One can view Jacqui's story at <http://www.helpjacqui.com/home.htm>. At the conclusion of the presentation, students are handed a pledge star that they can sign if they would like to. The pledge simply states that they will not drink and drive or get in a car with someone who has been drinking.

- C. **Past quarter deficiencies:** none
- D. **Past quarter recruiting/marketing efforts:** Recruiting efforts for YOP are limited.
- E. **Next quarter challenges:** Operating with a further reduced budget
- F. **Technical assistance needed:** Training on WIA Common Measures, when available.