

Women's Fund El Dorado Site Visit Subcommittee Report

Tahoe Turning Point, El Dorado County Western Slope

On March 30, 2016 Kristin N. Hunt, Outpatient Manager and Intake Coordinator of Tahoe Turning Point of Placerville met with several members of the Site Visit Subcommittee for an on-site orientation of the nonprofit's facility and programs; specifically, the fledgling Authentic Voice Program, which was awarded a WFED \$20,000 Focus Grant for 2015/2016.

Ms. Hunt gave Committee Chair Nancy Herman and members Sheila Fleege, Claudia Taylor, Dori Drake, Emogene Haller and MimiDene Williams a brief history of the non-profit's Lake Tahoe roots, the new Placerville facilities, and the staff's qualifications before our review of the Authentic Voice Program's progress so far. Ms. Hunt is completing her Bachelor's Degree in Psychology and therapist Amanda DiBiasie is completing her Master's Degree in Family Counseling. Cheyenne Dorsey is the nonprofit's Administrator.

The Authentic Voice Program merges mental health and substance abuse services to female clients who choose sobriety and freedom from addiction. Women who qualify for services must meet the poverty line and be diagnosed for these co-occurring disorders. They work with their therapists to develop individual treatment plans aimed at achieving personal goals with defined dates of completion. The program includes group and individual therapy sessions five times a week, weekly drug testing, journaling 5 to 7 days a week, and 30, 60, and 90 day evaluation of treatment plans and goals. Clients fill out questionnaires before and after each therapy session so that therapists can immediately assess progress. As clients become more stable and gain the tools to cope, the program will expand to coordinate access to training and other skills needed to attain and maintain financial stability, thus breaking the cycle of poverty.

Thirteen women have voluntarily sought help from Tahoe Turning Point in an attempt to become sober and improve the quality of their lives. Clients that are struggling with co-occurring disorders have a greater need for provider patience and outreach, and typically have a more difficult time with staying in the program long term. They have benefitted variably among the drug testing, individual substance abuse, mental health services and group services. However, once a client attends more than one session, she typically continues to completion. Indicators of success so far include the decrease of positive tests from some clients, active recovery steps, and longer periods of sober days. Early on in the program staff members discovered most clients have experienced PTSD or abuse, so they have received further training in this area. Childcare, as in so many of these programs, is a challenge, but so far it has been provided successfully.

The Authentic Voice Program is still in its early stages and the financial report revealed they have used about half of the WFED grant funds. They will be requesting an extension and the Site Visit Committee unanimously recommends that the extension be granted. We were impressed by the knowledge and enthusiasm of the staff and the progress that has been made on a complex, untried new program in such a short time.

Nancy Herman
WFED Site Visit Subcommittee