

2019 WFED Site Visit Report

3Strands Global Foundation

\$30,000 - Employ/Empower Reintegration Program

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CEO/President Ashlie Bryant, ashlieb@3sqf.org

Site Visit: March 25, 2019 with Ashlie Bryant (CEO), Sarah Consoli (Reintegration Program Manager), Kaitlyn Vargas (Reintegration Social Worker) & Ramon Manrique Mejia (Chief Operations Officer) by Avis Jolly, Emogene Haller, Kim Dickson & Heidi Venable

Follow-up visit: April 9, 2019 with Ashlie and Sarah by Dickson Schwarzbach, Robyn Parker & Emogene Haller

The goal for the grant money was to connect 15 survivors of human trafficking and at-risk youth in El Dorado County with sustainable, trauma-informed jobs and the social work services they need to maintain employment. They worked their plan but had delays and unexpected obstacles and challenges:

- Differences between their experience in Sacramento County and what they encountered in rural El Dorado County not initially identified as problematic (more visits required before talking with the correct people within organizations causing a delay in client referrals; more challenging clients with greater needs; fewer services available)
- Turnover in county and nonprofit staff requiring re-education
- They projected only needing a half-time social worker for El Dorado County but actually need a full-time person

It appears they will only be able to put 9 women through their program by the end of the granting year (May 31 2019), with an 80% projected retention rate rather than the expected 100%. At our request, and after a follow-up site visit by WFED leadership, 3Strands submitted a revised budget and grant goals document which was approved by the WFED cabinet in April. Additionally, based on the experience they gained from their first year implementing this program in El Dorado County, they revised their goals and projections downward to a more realistic level for their subsequent grant request, which was approved by WFED for the 2019/20 granting year.

Assistance League® Sierra Foothills

\$30,000 - Operation School Bell – Clothing Kids with Confidence

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Karen Beckman, Grant Chairman, karen@beckmanandasso.com, 916-608-4468

Site Visit: October 20, 2018 at Placerville Kmart by Claudia Taylor, Carolyn Mansfield, Emogene Haller

The stated goal was to provide 575 students from the Western Slope of El Dorado County in grades K – 8 with new school clothing. 65% of the recipients are in grades K-5 and the additional 35% are in grades 6-8. The younger students receive \$70 each and the older students receive \$100 each. In October and November 2018 five shopping events were held for students from 12 Western Slope school districts + students from the Home Study program; four events took place at the Kmart in Placerville and at the Target in El Dorado Hills. We visited the Kmart shopping event on October 20th. Parents accompanied their children as they chose appropriate clothing, including socks, underwear, cute outfits and warm jackets. Volunteers discreetly screened purchases to ensure they were all in scope and managed payment via vouchers at the checkout lines. Before leaving each student was

able to choose a free, new book to keep from an excellent selection of age-appropriate books, which for many students was a highlight of the shopping trip. During our time observing on a Saturday morning, one of the elementary school principals was there to see the program in action, because it is a big deal at his school. The Assistance League is an all-volunteer organization with minimal expenses, so nearly all of the \$30,000 grant went to pay for the actual clothing. The Assistance League has been implementing Operation Schoolbell for a number of years and their operation is very organized, streamlined, beneficial, effective, and has great buy-in from teachers, administrators, parents, students and volunteers. Despite expanding the program each year, they are only able to provide 13.6% of the disadvantaged (eligible for the free and reduced lunch program) K-8 students on the Western Slope.

Cougar Band Aides

\$8,000 - Musical Instrument Replacement at El Dorado High School

Dan Blair, President Band Aides, dansworkmail@sbcglobal.net

Heather Hill, heather_hill@comcast.net, 530-306-5975

Jared Collins, band leader, jarcoll499@gmail.com, EDHS: 530.622.3634

Site Visit: March 7, 2019 during EDHS band practice at EDHS by Avis Jolly, Denise Pané, Emogene Haller, Kim Dickson & Steve Schwarzbach

The Band Aides are a parent group which helps fund the needs of the music program at El Dorado High School, as the school district only supplies the band room, the band teacher, and a portion of the transportation money needed for the band to participate in events and competitions. The grant money was used as described in the grant request to purchase a new baritone saxophone, which is now part of the inventory of musical instruments loaned out to students. It is expected to remain in excellent playing condition for 20 years or more. The remaining \$457.51 was used to repair old instruments not being replaced. The grant money has been spent in full as proposed.

Hands4Hope - Youth Making A difference

\$4,500 - Youth Leadership Camp Scholarships

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Jennifer Bassett, Founder & Executive Director, jbassett@hands4hopeyouth.org

Nicole Craine, nicole@hands4hopeyouth.org

Site Visit: March 6, 2019 at the Hands4Hope Youth Center, 877 Embarcadero Drive, El Dorado Hills, CA at the monthly Youth Board meeting by Dickson Schwarzbach, Denise Pané, Emogene Haller & Kim Dickson

We met with a group of about 20 high school students who hold leadership positions in Hands 4 Hope at their monthly meeting. One site visit member describes these students as "perhaps the most articulate, passionate, reflective, confident, civic-minded group of high school students I have ever encountered. They have an in-depth understanding of not only the H4H mission, but the importance of H4H to the community as well as to the way it affects their lives as participants in the leadership program at H4H." All of the students praised the H4H program, the benefits derived from the leadership camp, the community service their groups provide, and the personal growth they have experienced. In their own words:

"In Hands 4 Hope, I feel included in the conversation."

"I have developed leadership skills and have overcome being an extremely shy introvert."

"Our power and our dedication are what make an impact."

"I have become more myself, more outgoing and confident with people, especially with adults."

"I'm proud of myself and of what we have done together."

The money granted by the Women's Fund was used to offer scholarships to those who could not afford Leadership Camp. The entire amount granted was not used last August due to scheduling conflicts, so they petitioned WFED to carry the funds over to the 2019 year and were granted their request.

Windows To My Soul

\$3,500 – To provide partial or full scholarships for individual trauma-informed therapy sessions for veterans, adults with disabilities, cancer patients and their families, and other individuals

Cindy R. Skelton-Hodge, Founder & President

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Site Visit: March 18, 2019 by Dickson Schwarzbach, Denise Pané, Emogene Haller, Heidi Venable, Steve Schwarzbach

3 staff members and 1 board member spent 3 hours with the site visit committee explaining their program, their methods, why equine-based therapy is so effective, what happens to the brain during their therapy sessions, etc. They practice two models of equine therapy, either individually or in conjunction with each other. *Natural Lifemanship* is based on the neuroscience of human and horse brain development, the impact of trauma, and the role of relationships in recovery and healing. The *Eagala Model* of treatment is a distinct, experience-based, team-approach framework designed to empower clients to analyze their situation, make connection, and find their own solutions through personal and physical experiences. In a given therapy session various tools and methods may be suggested or modeled such as swinging ropes rhythmically, walking in an intentional direction or manner, motioning, grooming, riding, etc. in order to build communication, relationship, trust and connection with a chosen horse. Each session always includes a certified therapist and an equine specialist, which costs \$190/ session, but which is usually reduced to \$100/session through in-kind donations of services.

Despite all the explanations and examples, it is still very difficult for most people to grasp how this type of therapy works and how effective it can be. Therefore, a member of the site visit committee was invited to experience the process first-hand in an abbreviated, individual session as a client. First she was asked to check in with her own internal state, then to choose a horse, then to check in with the horse to assess its internal state. The therapist gave clues as to the signals the horse was conveying. The horse and client were standing in an arena near each other. The client was asked what she wanted from the horse, and then had to figure out a way to make that happen by communicating without words, observing the behavior of the horse, and modifying her actions accordingly (all with the assistance of the therapist). At various points the client tried to connect to the horse, get the horse to hang out with her and follow her, and set boundaries so the horse wouldn't invade her personal space to the point of making her uneasy.

Next another committee member was chosen to have a session on horseback. However, during the initial check-in phase of the session the horse gave clear signs that it did not

want to have a person on its back, and its desires were respected. The client and horse then engaged with each other on foot in the arena instead.

Both committee members felt that their own personal issues became obvious to them and they had to deal with them by acknowledging them and confronting them and adjusting their behavior accordingly. Both felt they had profound experiences and realizations during their sessions.

In the meantime, some of the other committee members engaged with a donkey or a horse on their own and made connections. All who were there felt the power of the equine encounters and yet were somewhat at a loss to explain the connection and the significance, but it felt tangible and real.

Windows to My Soul helps veterans, people with developmental disabilities, families, cancer patients, domestic violence survivors and first responders to improve resilience, connection to self and others, and connection with community. They served 60 unduplicated clients and provided 308 sessions, as follows:

- Veterans = 45.8 percent
- Domestic Violence/Families = 31 percent
- Individuals with Developmental Disabilities = 19.1 percent
- Cancer = 4 percent

100% of clients received partial to full scholarships. No one was turned away for lack of ability to pay.

Clients reported the following:

- Significant increase in meeting therapeutic goals over traditional talk therapy
- Significant improvement in managing emotions
- Significant improvement in handling anxiety
- Better able to problem solve
- Significant improvement in personal relationships
- Better able to connect to self and others

Military Family Support Group

\$8,000 - "Crisis Fund" for El Dorado Veteran Resources

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Christine Leigh-Taylor, on behalf of Julie Leconte, CEO, Military Family Support Group

Julie's direct line: 530-497-0878

Site Visit: February 13, 2019 by Avis Holly, Emogene Haller, Kim Dickson, Pam Maxwell

This grant was intended to provide emergency/ crisis services for veterans such as gas cards, grocery cards, emergency housing, etc. To this end, MFSG has been fulfilling the intent of this grant appropriately.

This is a new organization which has had a steep learning curve as they strive to meet the needs for veterans. This learning curve has involved developing criteria for a "crisis" for veterans, and understanding this against a culture of homelessness. While a completely volunteer-run organization, MFSG seems to have progressed enough to understand that these "crisis" services need to be stop-gap services while they also work to assist veterans in the larger scheme of gaining security and stability. They are becoming more and more

sophisticated in ensuring that they are not simply enabling dependency. Instead they are working to assist veterans in overcoming challenges to reach their greatest potential towards health and stability. Part of this larger picture has involved developing partnerships with community and veteran resources, as well as building awareness of available resources. One of their biggest challenges as they grow is proper and accurate financial reporting: there seem to be some discrepancies between the expenditures listed in their narrative v. their spreadsheet of expenditures. Yet their dedication to the veterans and to growing and improving their services as an entirely volunteer operation is evident, as is their commitment to improving their processes.

Julie Leconte attributes the Woman's Fund El Dorado grant money to allowing their organization to be better known in the community, which has led to further acceptance, assistance and funding from outside organizations. As such, they don't see the necessity to seek further funding for their crisis fund, but instead hope to develop additional services, as well as advertising of their services so that veterans are aware of a place where they can receive assistance in a non-threatening manner.

Remarkably, their holistic approach to veterans has been noted by the state, which is seeking to emulate what is being done in El Dorado County as a model for other locations.