

WFED Site Visit Reports 2020

3Strands Global Foundation

\$30,000 - Employ/Empower Reintegration Program

4661 Golden Foothill Pkwy Suite 206, El Dorado Hills CA; (916) 365-2606

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

Site Visit: March 3, 2020 with Ashlie Bryant (CEO), Kaitlyn DiCicco (Reintegration Program Manager), Lisa Villanueva (Reintegration Case Manager) by Emogene Haller, Denise Pané, Heidi Venable and Janeen Stewart + Ainslie Howenstine from Marketing

This is the second consecutive year that 3Strands Global received a \$30,000 grant from us. Their Employ/Empower Program helps victims of trafficking or those at risk of being trafficked to gain stable housing, transportation and employment, while having access to counseling and other support. Our grant last year enabled them to bring the program they started in Sacramento County to El Dorado County, but they encountered issues in our county not found to the same extent in Sacramento (rural, a majority of clients have 2+ risk factors, partner organizations operate differently here than in Sacramento, difficulty getting referrals), and had to revise their goals downwards. Last year they were able to help 9 women through their program (the goal was 15) with an 80% projected retention rate rather than the expected 100%; this year they set more modest goals and it looks like they will exceed them. Their goal was to continue to support the 15 clients who were in process from last year's grant, plus an additional 8, with a program retention rate of 75%. With still 3 months left to accomplish more, they have:

- Received an average of 4 referrals/month since June of 2019
- Retained 9 of the 15 clients still receiving services from last year's grant
- Provided services to an additional 12, with 4 more referrals scheduled for an intake meeting.
- Since project inception, 28 clients have received services and 12 have been placed in jobs, with 11 more projected to be placed in jobs by May 2020
- Their role remains that of a social worker connecting clients to other available services

Staff and Program improvements:

- In mid-July a full-time social worker devoted solely to El Dorado County began her position; prior to that the social worker divided her time between Sacramento and El Dorado counties. This one change has probably had the biggest impact.
- In mid-September the Reintegration Manager left for graduate school, and the former Social Worker who had divided her time became the Program Manager
- On June 26, 2019 a new HIPPA-compliant client database called Apricot Social Solutions was implemented, which has enabled them to securely store and track client notes, demographic data & reports, services, budget and finances, and client documents, thus helping them to be more efficient and more organized.
- They hired Dr. Carly Dierkhising of California State University, Los Angeles, to help them revise their pre- and post- surveys and measurement tools to gather much higher-quality feedback, and implemented Microsoft Forms to make it easier for their clients to take the surveys.

In the first year of a new program there can be false starts, unexpected obstacles, setbacks, and a steep learning curve; in the second year, an organization should be able to put into practice what was learned during the first year. For example, in the first year it took months of outreach, education, and re-education (due to external staff changes) to establish relationships with other agencies to get referrals; in the second year referrals started coming in at 4 per month. 3Strands Global seems to be an example of the benefits of providing consistent funding for two years or more.

El Dorado County Fire Safe Council

\$8,000 - Develop Defensible Space Buffer Around Veteran and Senior Homes

P.O. Box 1011, Diamond Springs CA 95619; 530-344-1642

Ernie Lory, ernielory@aol.com

Site Visit: February 7, 2020 with Ernie Lory, by Avis Jolly, Emogene Haller, Jane Meuser, Steve Schwarzbach + Mindee Dziuba (Marketing)

This grant proposal addresses the clear need to create defensible space to mitigate the danger of wildfires to the homes of low-income seniors and Veterans on the Western Slope who are physically and financially unable to clear their land themselves. The focus is on clearing the 30 feet immediately surrounding the veterans' and seniors' homes.

The WFED grant was a stopgap to continue service while the organization secured larger amounts from PG&E and SMUD. However, due to a new 5101 ordinance that was passed increasing the standards for residential properties, the requirements to bring properties even close to compliance doubled in cost. The initial cost estimate to clear a property was \$300-\$500, but with the new ordinance the cost per unit neared \$1,000. Therefore, instead of clearing 23 properties, only 10 were cleared: 8 for veterans, and 2 for low-income seniors. EDCFSC was aware of this change in June, just after receiving funds, and failed to notify WFED of this potential impact. All funds were expended by September.

Two other notes:

- The current application for requesting services only has a check box with regards to status to receive services, which is veteran and/or physical or financial hardships. The organization takes no further steps to ensure the applicants are being truthful in their application.
- Another minor area of concern has to do with subcontractors. Once the property is evaluated by the Council, the actual work is subcontracted out, and there are only sporadic checks done on completed work. However, it is likely that homeowners would complain were the work not done.

This grant sparked several discussions and changes to our procedures:

- By vote, the membership had approved a proposal to clear up to 30 feet of defensible space for low-income Seniors and Veterans; the goal of protecting 23 homes was only mentioned later in the grant proposal, so it was determined that the organization had accomplished the goal that was voted on. It is unclear if we should require specific number goals in the ballot summary.
- Last year the grant recipients were verbally instructed to notify the WFED if there were goals which could not be met, money which could not be spent, or changes to goals or expenditures, but there were no written instructions to that effect. To address this issue, this year grant recipients were sent a "Letter of Instruction" detailing when they must notify us of changes to the services or expenditures detailed in their grant proposal. Originally the Site Visit Committee made first contact in January; last year we started in September; this year the Site Visit Chair will be present at the check disbursement meeting on June 1, liaisons will make contact within 2 weeks of check receipt, and a schedule of contact will be agreed upon based on each project timeline.
- This grant confirmed the need for communication and coordination between the Grants and Site Visit Committees. In light of our current policy of allowing organizations to receive grants 2 years in a row, it seems advisable to have a feedback loop from Site Visit to Grants

before membership voting occurs. Over the past two years we have been changing the timing of when Site Visit members make contact – it now occurs at the same time as check disbursement. Making earlier contact will hopefully provide time for Site Visit to let Grants know of any concerns prior to creation of the next ballot.

El Dorado Union High School District Robotics Team

\$8,000 - Supporting Youth in the Pursuit of STEM and Robotics

6540 Koki Lane, El Dorado, CA 95623; 530-622-6212

Patricia Ferrell, Advisor, EDUHSD Robotics Team, 530-957-6508, patferrell58@gmail.com

Site Visit: March 12, 2020 with Pat Ferrell and student members of the Robotics team, by Denise Pane, Emogene Haller, Jane Meuser, Steve Schwarzbach, Valerie Bradley + Mindee Dziuba (Marketing)

We met in the Robotics rooms where the team was very hard at work building their 2020 robot and gearing up for the 2020 *FIRST* Robotics Competition *Infinite Recharge!* We got to see their 2019 Robot in action, and even played catch with it and saw it shoot baskets.

All site visit members were extremely impressed with the program. The use of WF's grant money is 100% on target thus far.

- The robotics team is well organized and there is a VERY positive and productive environment for the students on the team
- The team is well established with their shop and various computers, tools and machines needed, although its location is at one of the smallest high schools (the Virtual Academy)
- The yearly cost of registration for their competitions is high. WFED grant money paid for registration in the FIRST® Robotics Competition (FRC) and for supplies and materials to fabricate and build their 120-pound robot for the FRC
- Financial information is tracked in a detailed manner
- In total, the students willingly and excitedly put in about 400 hours on this team in just a few months, including 4 days a week after school and all day, every weekend for 6 weeks. The students receive no school credit for being part of the team
- One of their team building exercises is "Roboetry" – each student recites poetry he/she composed or which was composed by a robot/computer program!
- Skills and roles of all types contribute to the team – students do fundraising, organizing, emailing, computer-aided design, welding & soldering, electronics, hydraulics, etc.
- The team makes strategic decisions on how many parts of the competition to attempt (other schools have much larger teams and are much better financed)
- There are currently 8 girls on the 19-person team, which is the most females ever
- The students are mentored by skilled adults in the community as well as past students who are now working in a related field (many attribute their getting jobs in the field to having been a part of the Robotics Team)
- Pat, the advisor, is a detailed record keeper and has used the WF grant as proposed. She is a wonderful unpaid volunteer who is as dedicated to the students as the students are to their project.

Update: The team successfully designed and built their robot named "Procyon" but were unable to test it in competition as all of their events were indefinitely postponed due to the COVID-19 lockdown. Their attached newsletter details all of Procyon's "skills."

Hands4Hope

\$8,000 - Empowering Youth At El Dorado High School & Beyond Through Education & Community Engagement

El Dorado High School and 3941 Park Drive, Suite 20-264, El Dorado Hills CA 95762

Jennifer Bassett, jbassett@hands4hopeyouth.org, 916-294-7426

Site Visit: March 11, 2020 with students Annabelle, Cory and Jorje, by Denise Pané, Emogene Haller, Janeen Stewart + Amy Pooley (Marketing)

The goal was to launch a Hands4Hope Service Learning Club at El Dorado High School (the only major high school on the Western Slope without a chapter), establish a Placerville Youth Center for after school programming, and help Hands4Hope youth gain skills while identifying and filling unmet community needs.

Accomplishments:

- Located and hired a program staff person, who actually had to retire from teaching to accept the job
- 2 students completed summer leadership camp and became President and Vice President of the chapter (the goal was to have 4 students attend – the student selection process has been revised for the future)
- The club has:
 - Secured a house near the high school to be their Placerville Youth Center. Signed a lease and secured help with renovations from Home Depot
 - Completed one major community project – volunteer organization for the Placerville Empty Bowls fundraiser. Recruited and provided leadership to 100 youth volunteers from all of the major high schools in El Dorado County (18 from El Dorado) - organized, trained, and supported these volunteers through set-up, the event, and clean-up.
 - Women’s Fund 2019 Interim Report_Hands4Hope
 - Created a fundraising project (bake sale) to raise money for laundry detergent for the Upper Room, and are creating a fundraising dinner “Upper Supper” to be held in April 24
 - Have directly impacted 20 students (goal is 100)
 - Have strong leaders who will be in their junior or senior year next year
- Challenges:
 - Hiring an advisor took longer than expected
 - Power outage followed by holidays in November/December disrupted project with Upper Room, and resulted in decreased student participation
 - Securing the Youth Center took more time than anticipated - ribbon cutting ceremony planned for May
- Goals in process:
 - Leaders are learning about their personality/leadership
 - Working on creating a feeder system, where High School leaders go to Middle Schools to help with transition to Freshman year
 - Youth leaders expressed future goal of working more with homeless youth and seniors
 - Assessment is done annually using CERVIS Volunteer Management System
 - When the three leaders were asked what is the biggest thing they have gained from the program, they answered:
 - Anabelle is a strong leader, who is learning to delegate more. She feels better equipped to be part of a collaborative team, and enjoys it more.
 - Jorje is learning to lead instead of just participating. He feels a stronger sense of confidence and self -esteem.
 - Camry is excited to have an outlet to give back to the community. She and her mother were helped by the Upper Room in the past.

Update: Hands 4 Hope requested that \$2,000 of their grant funds be extended through September 2020 to spend the unused equipment balance on the Youth Center and the remaining balance for program staff and supplies at the start of the 2020-21 school/club year.

Master Gardeners of El Dorado County

\$30,000 – Share the Goodness of the Sherwood Demonstration Garden

311 Fair Lane, Placerville, CA 95667; 530-644-1631

Robyn Stanley, birdwomanca@comcast.net

Site Visit: Site visit planned for March 20 was cancelled due to lockdown

The grant money was used to fund the construction of a 24' x 35' pergola at the Sherman Demonstration Garden as a "covered outdoor educational center" to enable the Master Gardeners to launch a new nutrition-focused gardening program called "Growing for Goodness" as well as teach hands-on classes/workshops and host school field trips year-round. The grant money funded the cost of the pergola, seating, and retractable cover. The Demonstration Garden has not yet opened this year and classes are on hold due to the pandemic. A "slide show tour" of the Gardens is available online at <https://youtu.be/PYSMSMSYHTk>.



SAFE-D of El Dorado County Inc.

\$8,000 - Free grab bar installations for low income seniors and the disabled

P.O.Box 1808, Shingle Springs CA 95726, 530-394-3194

James Wassner, staff@safe-d.link

Site Visit: February 18, 2020 with James Wassner, by Avis Jolly, Emogene Haller & Jane Meuser + Elise Barnhill (Marketing)

SAFE-D stands for "Safety Accommodations For Elders and the Disabled." It is a small, all-volunteer nonprofit which supplies and installs home safety accommodations such as grab bars, step rails, shower seats, non-slip bath mats, raised toilet seats with handles, smoke and carbon monoxide detectors, night lights and bed rails to increase safety and accessibility for lower-income seniors (60+ in age, \$2200/month or less in income) or people with a disability.

- Jim's background is as a contractor + 25 years as an EDC building inspector
- The process is that a referral comes in, Jim vets them over the phone to qualify income and need, then makes an in-person assessment visit to assess what is needed and make sure the home is suitable for his volunteers (so far all have been). The prospective client must also show written proof of income to make sure they qualify as low-income. Once approved, the installation visit is usually scheduled for the following week.
- A maximum of \$250 in materials may be spent on each client. Actual history shows that the average cost of supplies per client is about \$150, so a revised budget was issued in which the projected material costs were revised downwards from \$24,000/year to \$16,760/year.
- Moen gives them a discount on safety bars, but one month a year (June) gives an even bigger discount, so Jim took the opportunity to purchase a large quantity of grab bars to have in stock for installs. He spent all but \$44.03 of the WFED grant money in the first 2 weeks of June on safety equipment.
- Have been operating out of Jim's garage, but Churchill's Hardware has donated storage space for the materials as well as an office space for Jim and their donated computer.
- Now have 5 volunteers to do the work
- Although they have a \$250 maximum/client to spend on equipment, their history shows they spend an average of \$150/client, so they have revised their annual equipment budget from \$24,000/year down to \$16,760/year.
- They average 2 installations/week and expect to exceed their goal of 96 annual installs

Update: They had to stop doing installs due to COVID-19, as their clients and volunteers are seniors, but they did complete 69. They spent the grant money on supplies, and no numbers were mentioned in their ballot summary, so they met their obligation, if not their goal. They received another grant from us this year and are anxious to proceed with installations. They had expected to do 200+ installs this year.

Sierra Elementary School

\$30,000 - Defending Hope through Social Emotional Learning

1100 Thompson Way, Placerville, CA 95667; 530-622-0814

Principal: Patricia Horn, phorn@pusdk8.us

Site Visit: February 24, 2020 with Patty Horn (Principal), Alisa Inks (School Counselor), by Avis Jolly, Emogene Haller, Janeen Stewart, Steven Schwarzbach & Jane Meuser

The goal for the grant money was to extend the workweek for their counselor, Alisa Inks from 4 days a week on campus to the full 5 days, not only to make her accessible to more referred

students, but also to establish preventive measures through informal "lunch bunch" gatherings as well as social-emotional lessons in the classroom. In addition, the funds were to be utilized for Parent-Info Nights to engage parents in the students' well-being, and additional training and curriculum for the counselor.

Grant funds helped support:

- Additional counselling needed by an influx of new students who had immediate counselling needs
- Additional student counseling needed due to the death of Officer Brian Ishmael, whose family is part of this school's community. 22 students were counseled due to this tragedy alone.
- With WFED approval, funds originally intended for "supplies" were redirected to purchase convertible tables to create a "Dragon's Lair," a meeting space where informal "lunch bunch" get-togethers occur for small groups. Over 95 students have participated in over 60 lunch bunch sessions.
- 27 classroom social-emotional classroom lessons have been delivered with an additional 27 on track to complete by the end of the year. Last year only 7 lessons were delivered.
- 86 students have been referred for counseling this year with 55 of those having signed consent. This is well above the 27 students from the previous year.

Due to the heavy caseload as well as administrative changes at their sister school, some adjustments continue to occur. Lunch Bunches were being suspended, as of our visit, to allow the counselor to focus on her individual cases. Instead, worry boxes have been implemented in each classroom to allow her to keep a pulse on all students during this time. Parent Info nights are being exchanged for once a month "Coffee with a Counselor" as childcare needs during the evening hours are too overwhelming. The counselor was on-track to attend a professional training regarding "75 quick techniques for emotional and behavioral problems in the classroom."

Currently chronic absenteeism is at 2%, down from 9% last year and close to the goal set in the grant of 1%. School-wide absenteeism is flat to last year. Suspensions are down from 8 to 5. The school is still awaiting measurement data from the California Healthy Kids Survey.

While large strides have been made this year, eyes have been opened to a larger problem which is trauma in students' lives and the inability to learn when it is present. The WFED visit committee probed our presenters and received feedback that in addition to applying for another WFED grant they are working additional angles to ensure this level of counseling can continue.

Update: Sierra Elementary has applied for a grant extension due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. They applied for but did not receive another grant from us. The extension will fund a 5th day of pay+benefits for their school counsellor through December 2020, whether she provides services on-site or virtual.