VIVA LAS VEGAS!

The Society of Human Resources Management (SHRM) held their Annual Conference & Exposition which provides Human Resources (HR) professionals from around the world with the best human resources education available in Las Vegas, Nevada the last week of June. A Business Services team of five from Alliance For Workforce Development, Inc. (AFWD) were sent to attend the vast array of educational sessions offered during this 4 day conference.

The diversity of subjects were very beneficial to the team. Daily strategies were put into plan as the five would divide and conquer the breakout sessions to gather as much information and reference materials to bring back to share with all AFWD Business Service Representatives.

SHRM provided some big name headliners who had such passion and were so motivating to the conference attendees.

- Mike “Coach K” Krzyzewski
- Marcus Buckingham
- Mika Brzezinski
- Dr. Mehmet Oz

Catherine Madsack, Business Service Representative from the Chico office stated, “The SHRM conference was a great networking experience. The breakout sessions were led by great speakers and most were very engaging, giving you the opportunity to interact with others and learn how various businesses address challenges similar to those our local companies face”. Esteban Tadeo, Business Service Representative from the Oroville office mentioned, “I thought all the speakers were informative and inspiring. The California Labor Law breakout session was one of my favorites because it gave a thorough overview of upcoming laws that will effect employers I work with. Being able to come back with a better understanding of these laws helped me understand and assist local businesses”.

With programs that serve the needs of all attendees career path, this conference provided an atmosphere of learning, networking, inspiration, collaboration and engagement that was unprecedented.
Reentry Employment Specialist Training

Three lucky employees at Alliance for Workforce Development Inc. participated in a Reentry Employment Specialist (RES) training on August 4 and 5, 2015 at the Rio Cosumnes Correctional Center in Elk Grove, CA. Heather Alexander, Kim Keith and Raechelle Villarreal met with industry professionals from various law enforcement and community agencies to learn collaborative ways to job develop for clients that have justice system involvement. They discussed the importance of assessments to identify barriers, which may require immediate intervention and to identify ongoing criminogenic risks and needs, as well as techniques and strategies that clients can use to become more employable. Topics included how to respond to questions about felony convictions at interviews, enhancing correctional clients’ job readiness, and the importance of networking. There were strategies discussed regarding the importance of employer engagement including how to discuss the benefits to the employer of hiring those with criminal records.

Alliance for Workforce Development is looking at bringing this certified Federal Bureau of Prisons training to Butte and Lassen counties in the future. The innovative tactics and best practices for working with clients with records will ensure we are giving them the most informed help with their employment goals.

The discussions and information learned was relevant and timely; “In 2010 it is estimated that 19.8 million people representing 8.6% of the population of the United States have a felony conviction. This is almost double what it was in 1980.” * http://www.aegisjournal.com/felons-in-the-workforce .
With California facing one of the most severe droughts on record, the Alliance for Workforce Development, Inc. (AFWD) received National Emergency Grant funds to provide public and non-profit entities with assistance for temporary help to work on drought-related projects.

Alliance for Workforce Development, Inc assessed the need for temporary jobs by surveying the needs of public and non-profit entities to determine where additional help was needed. It has been a great benefit to one local agency who did not have the manpower or funding to work on their drought-related projects. The grant has also provided jobs for unemployed workers, who had either been laid off, had hours reduced due to the drought conditions or had been unemployed for 15 out of the last 26 weeks and living in a drought affected area.

Lassen Land and Trails Trust (LL&TT) had drought project needs in Lassen County. Through AFWD, four employees were hired to work on the projects LL&TT had lined up. Alonza Beacham was hired as the Crew Leader. Kenneth Johnson, Jeremy McLain, and Jason Roderick, are the Crew Members. These four men began working in the second week of August, and first tackled projects at the Bizz Johnson Trailhead, along the trail, and at the Train Depot in Susanville. The projects included fence repair to decrease illegal motorized trespass to lower the risk of fire danger that has been exacerbated by the drought. The men were also tasked with the removal of dead plant material, encroaching plants, and noxious weeds to improve defensible space, and fuel breaks for improved safety along North and South Railroads, on trails, and around parking areas.

A larger project is now underway, the crew has been working out near Bogard, along Highway 44 on a restoration project consisting of the removal of windfall lodge pole pine in the Upper Stephens Meadow, as well as restoring the riparian corridor and montane meadow through native plantings. They have also installed safety signage in key locations, which included critical wetland areas, and worked to improve the stream flows of Pine Creek, including removal of slash and debris to reduce the fuel load, thus preventing more wild fires in the area. This restoration project will improve water quality in the Eagle Lake Watershed through the protection of this working landscape on upper Pine Creek, the primary tributary to Eagle Lake. It will also preserve the valuable wildlife habitat of the Sierra Nevada.

These projects have helped to educate citizens in the importance of water and natural resources in the Sierra Nevada and provided temporary jobs for individuals in our area gain transferable skills.

Great Job, LL&TT Drought Crew!

(More pictures continued on next page)
Lassen Technical Assistance Program for Microenterprise Businesses

Alliance for Workforce Development, Inc. working with Lassen County, for the Microenterprise Technical Assistance program offered a vast array of services to eligible businesses and entrepreneurs in all stages of business development and operations.

The Technical Assistance program has several eligibility factors such as 5 or fewer employees including the owner(s), total household income eligibility requirements, live in Lassen County and the business must be in Lassen County. Participants identified areas of interest and need for their business development and entrepreneurs had the opportunity to explore all necessary areas of actually opening a business.

Professional consultants were available to meet with nine participants one-on-one and work together step by step in the areas of need and interest, which includes some of the following:

- Business Plan Development
- Financial Counseling
- Marketing Assistance
- Loan Preparation and Packaging
- Business Structure

During this program two entrepreneurs opened their businesses, three businesses have been able to redefine their product and services focus, two have expanded their business opportunities in the community and two are still in the discovery stages of what they must have lined out to actually make their ideas come to life.

**Entrepreneur** – Jessica Glenn stated, “This opportunity has opened my eyes to many possibilities for my business, I really had no idea how much research and area demographics are needed to get realistic numbers not only on the money side but on my client side as well. I am so fortunate to have been referred to contact Alliance for Workforce Development regarding this program.”

**Carry On! Special Care** owner – Carmen Carrion continues on with updating her business plan, has been successful in securing a contract with a wonderful provider and has been able to offer four people employment.
Jordan came to Alliance for Workforce Development, Inc. for assistance with updating her resume and for help with job search strategies. She had been working part-time at Round Table Pizza and was also attending classes at Lassen Community College with a focus in Wildland Firefighting. As most fire-fighting positions are seasonal, Jordan felt the need to pursue a full-time, stable position, so she could become financially independent. She worked with her Career Center Advisor to create a resume focusing on her transferrable skills that she attained from her recently acquired training. Jordan applied for many positions and submitted applications to various agencies.

After a couple of weeks, Jordan received an offer for a full-time position as a Material Handler for AECOM/URS Corporation out at the Sierra Army Depot in Herlong, CA. This job will allow her an opportunity to become independent. She started this job mid-September and reports that it is going great.

Congratulations, Jordan!
Justin had been searching for a good paying job in the Susanville area with no success. Justin has had a long-time interest in firefighting. With a great love for the outdoors, and previous work experience with driving tractors, bulldozers, Wildland Fire Fighting was a natural career choice for Justin. Justin enrolled in the Fire Science program at Lassen Community College (LCC) with this goal in mind.

Justin came to Alliance for Workforce Development, Inc. seeking assistance with his firefighter training, his resume, and job search strategies. With the help of his Career Center Advisor, Justin created a resume and submitted applications to find work as a Wildland Firefighter. He and his CCA also worked on his interviewing skills and they discussed suggestions on areas to improve to ace the interview.

Justin received many referrals for firefighter positions. He successfully completed his Certificate of Accomplishment Basic Firefighter in May of 2015! Justin was soon interviewed and offered a job with the Bureau of Land Management on their fire crew, where he has been working since May of 2015. Justin plans to continue his studies to receive his AA Degree in Fire Science at Lassen Community College. His goal is to become a professional firefighter, and he is well on his way. Great work, Justin!!
Getting to College – One Step at a Time

Just about a year ago, Westwood Charter School teacher Mary Lou Staggs set up a meeting with several of her high school seniors to hear about AFWD’s Youth Program. Although all were eligible based on the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) guidelines, only one was interested in the program. Sarriah Jimenez-Renteria comes from a close family of six, where she is the eldest of four children. Originally from Delano, the family relocated to Susanville and then settled in Westwood. Sarriah has been a student at Westwood Charter since her junior year. She was struggling this her year with Algebra and Mrs. Staggs wanted her to take advantage of the tutoring at the school’s Susanville location. Sarriah agreed to a plan to come to Susanville to attend tutoring and participate in the Youth Program workshops. Eligibility was determined and Sarriah was enrolled in the youth program. AFWD assisted her with bus passes to make the trips from Chester to Susanville. Although Sarriah initially seemed motivated to finish this plan, she was just not travelling to Susanville.

Sarriah’s Career Center Advisor set up an appointment with her and her mother in Westwood. Sarriah wanted to participate in the program, she was simply hesitant to ride the bus without the accompaniment of another family member. Thankfully her Westwood teacher had worked diligently to help her pass Algebra, so tutoring was no longer an issue. A compromise was reached that her Career Center Advisor would meet with her at the school in Westwood. Sarriah completed most of the Youth Program workshops while attending school. Her CCA even coordinated the workbook for her elective class in Life Skills with the Youth Program Basic Life Skills workshop. Sarriah was assisted with completing the FAFSA and the online application for Lassen College.

On June 4th, Sarriah received her high school diploma. A couple of weeks later, her CCA helped her obtain a California ID card, and transported her to placement testing appointment at Lassen College. Sarriah was introduced to the EOP&S counselors and the Learning Center. Later that month, she participated in AFWD’s special “Take This Job and Love It” workshop at Lassen College. After the workshop, Sarriah met with a counselor, where she enrolled in an art and psychology class for the fall semester.

To foster her interest in psychology, Sarriah’s CCA arranged an informational interview with Scott Nordstrom, a Clinical Supervisor with Lassen County Behavioral Health. Sarriah was able to ask him questions about his education and background, his job responsibilities, and other careers associated in this field. It provided some new information for her to consider. Sarriah is extremely happy to be at Lassen College. She is enjoying classes and the college atmosphere.
Youth Education Summit Conference

Over 120 foster youth in Lassen, Plumas, Modoc, Sierra and Trinity counties were invited to the 6th Annual Youth Education Summit (Y.E.S.) held on September 12 & 13, 2015 at the Grizzly Creek Ranch in Portola, CA. This was a multi-collaborative project with Probation, Child and Family Services, Independent Living Program, local Community Colleges, local Offices of Education, and Alliance for Workforce Development, Inc.

The purpose of the project was to gather current and past foster youth with biological and foster families to share in an educational, team-building and bonding opportunity experience. The venue offered outdoor events including a ropes course. Two professional motivational speakers, Dee Hankins and Derek Clark inspired the crowd with stories of personal triumph overcoming challenges they faced in the foster care system. A magic show, games, skits and a dance provided additional entertainment. Parents and professional staff were given staff development from UC Davis on Recognizing Teen Drug Abuse. After a night spent in rustic cabins the event provided breakout sessions on a wide variety of topics such as College Financial Aid, Healthy Teen Relationships, Foster Youth Rights and Youth Employment offered by Alliance for Workforce Development Inc.

The event was offered for free to eligible families and participating youth were given fabulous gifts at the end of the event that included laptop computers, tablets and bikes. Alliance for Workforce Development was able to contribute sturdy backpacks, water bottles, flash drives and pencils to all participants. All agreed that they could hardly wait for next year’s Y.E.S Conference!
Lassen County Visitors
4,998

AFWD Business Services

- Business Served: 436
- Service Provided: 1,303
- Positions Filled: 343
- Training Assistance: 71

Program Services

Total enrollments

- Adult: 92
- Dislocated Worker: 63
- Youth: 24
- Employed: 87

Unemployment Rate

- Butte: 6.9%
- Lassen: 6.4%
- Modoc: 7.3%
- Nevada: 5.2%
- Plumas: 7.6%
- Sierra: 6.5%