Education, Knowledge, and Application = SUCCESS!

Alliance For Workforce Development, Inc. (AFWD) Business Services Team was well represented at the 2016 Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) conference held in Washington D.C. SHRM is the world’s largest HR professional society that offers information and support for individuals working with, for and together on the human resources side of businesses and organization. This conference provides an opportunity for the Business Service Representatives to gain valuable skills and information that is played forward for the businesses AFWD staff serve.

The team strategized on the subjects and speakers the conference had to offer and split up to attend as many as possible. The team would then recap what each had learned with co-workers to ensure the information and resources were carried back to each of the offices in the six AFWD Counties.

‘Grow Your People’ was quite prevalent as a theme around the conference with three key points that created those “Aha” moments for many.

VALUE THEM- decide what’s important and never take it for granted
CENTER THEM- never lose focus
EMPOWER THEM- none of us are as smart as all of us

For the business communities keeping all of the labor laws, recruitment, retention, employee skills upgrade and all the other motivational data, heading on the same course is a daunting task in itself let alone keeping the operation of the company moving positively. With assistance from the AFWD business service’s team, together these areas can be addressed quickly and efficiently.
A Meeting of the Minds

On August 11, 2016 Youth Career Advisors from Alliance for Workforce Development, Inc.’s six counties convened in Lassen County for their Youth All Staff. Staff were praised for a successful 2015-2016 year and celebrated their youth’s achievements. They were also tasked with the challenges they may face in the coming year and brainstormed ideas as to how they might face them. The “Work Base Directive” was provided, as well as estimated projections for meeting the directive as a whole. A “Worksite Development Flowchart” was developed and reviewed to ensure that all Youth Career Advisors followed certain essential steps thereby increasing their youth clients’ work experience outcomes. An employer-focused approach to worksite development was discussed. The importance of face-to-face interactions with employers, close communication, and ensuring that the youth’s barriers were addressed before worksite placement were topics agreed to improve success for the client, as well as the business. In addition, staff went over how to tie career and personal assessments into an Individual Service Strategy using a Personal Goal Rubric to identify a clear career path and to meet individual needs.

Discussion also ensued regarding the differences each County faces in regards to educational opportunities, transportation, and job prospects. Creative partnerships were encouraged and staff were advised to look at all possible assistance in their county a youth may utilize to help them meet their needs. Tips on time management and ways to elevate personal and client motivation were also topics.

Youth Advisors were also able to share a three-minute speech on a youth topic. Staff shared stories that ranged from their first youth work experience to how they deal with difficult situations. Staff had the opportunity of expressing their appreciation by presenting the Youth Program Manager with a “Most Motivational Manager” award.

The new program year may come with challenges, but one thing is certain, the Youth Advisors at Alliance for Workforce Development, Inc. have the right attitude and the right leadership to be successful.
This Is What Has Been Missing From My Life!

Irene has lived in the Susanville area for many years. She was laid off when her 4-year term position ended with the Department of Defense at the Sierra Army Depot in 2013. At that time, she was eligible for and went on unemployment. Irene was unsuccessful in finding a self-sustainable occupation after her lay-off. She heard about the Business and Career Network services and came to see if she participate in the program to assist her in her job search.

Irene met several times with her Career Center Advisor to assess the type of work she would be suited for and worked to make her resume professional. She received interview suggestions and assistance, and worked on upgrading her computer skills in Microsoft Word. She also worked to achieve her CPR and First Aid certificates. She submitted several applications, and in August, Irene had the opportunity to interview for a position as a Food Service I/II Worker with Diamond View Middle School, part of the Susanville School District. Among her many qualifications, Irene had previous experience working in Food Service and felt this would make good use of her skills and allow her to help others as well. Irene received an offer of employment, and began working on August 16, 2016 which was the first day of the new school year.

Irene is working hard, and on top of preparing and serving the meals at Diamond View School, she is responsible for checking the inventory and making sure they have the required food items. Irene has since expressed to her CCA she is really enjoying the position so far. She stated, “This is what has been missing from my life--feeling appreciated every day. It has made me happier, and I feel better.” Irene is grateful for the assistance she received from AFWD. Congratulations on finding this meaningful work, Irene!
Stay-at-Home Mom turns Computer Technician

Being a stay at home mom for the past 15 years, Laura had no need for a full-time, paid position and had worked only in part-time paid positions over the past 15 years. She home schooled several of her children, who have since finished high school. She volunteered at KWLK 88.5 Radio station as an Assistant Production/Operation Manager for the last year and a half.

Since all of Laura’s children were out of school, she decided to return to work full-time. She requested one-on-one assistance with her job search from a Career Center Advisor, (CCA) with Alliance for Workforce Development, Inc. (AFWD). After completing assessments, it was determined Laura would do well in administrative or clerical work. She worked to improve her computer skills utilizing Alison.com, and was able to achieve certificates of completion for Microsoft Word and Excel. Laura applied for several positions, but got really excited when she found there were openings with the Susanville School District for Paraprofessional positions. She felt she would be able to make good use of her previous experience with home schooling to work with children in the Susanville schools. Laura originally applied for a position as a Paraprofessional, but when the Human Resources Department found out she had computer experience and had received her certificates in Word and Excel, they offered her the full-time position of Computer Lab Technician. Laura now monitors and instructs students in the Computer Lab at Meadow View School.

Laura confided, “At first I wasn’t sure I could do it, but now I really like it. And the challenging kids are my favorites because I get to spend more time with them.” Nice work, Laura, on finding a job you’ve got a knack for!
Determination Can Take You Places

Maria came to the Business and Career Network after relocating to the area from Utah. She had worked previously in Watsonville, CA as an Inventory Forecaster/Administrative Assistant. That position had been temporary, and Maria was eligible for Unemployment from it. She was not likely to return to that career path, as there were no similar openings in the Susanville area. She requested assistance from Alliance for Workforce Development Inc., (AFWD) Career Center Advisor, (CCA) as she was interested in upgrading her resume and learning interview skills.

Maria was extremely motivated and wanted to apply for accounting, administrative and customer service positions. Most of the positions Maria applied for were with Lassen County and the Susanville Indian Rancheria, and required testing. For this reason, Maria sought to brush up on her computer and office skills to increase her chances at employment. Maria met with a CCA who showed her the possible websites for improving her computer skills and administered tests to Maria so she could see what areas she needed to focus and improve on. Maria worked diligently at improving her skills. Her CCA also researched and provided Maria with several position-specific practice tests as well.

Maria was assisted with the development of professional resumes which focused mainly on Customer Service, Administrative and Account Technician positions. Together they went over interviewing skills as well. Maria had some previous work experience in the financial area, and applied for the position of Account Technician with Susanville Indian Rancheria when it came open. After all of her studying, Maria was able to ace her required tests. She attended an interview, and was offered the position of Account Technician with the Susanville Indian Rancheria. She has been working there since the last week of August and is very happy so far. She says it is challenging and busy, but she feels she has learned a lot already. Her co-workers are kind and helpful.

In response to a survey, Maria stated her CCA “is an amazing person. She gives 150% to helping clients get a job. She is really great at her job. Thank you!” Thank you, Maria for trying so hard and making your CCA’s job easier!
Y.E.S.- YOUTH EDUCATION SUMMIT

On September 17 and 18, over 120 people participated in the 7th Annual Youth Education Summit (Y.E.S.). The event was held 8 miles south of Susanville CA. at Mountain Meadows Ranch. The rustically beautiful traditional summer camp offered the campers an extensive array of activities including a large natural lagoon complete with water play equipment, lawn sports, and rope course adventures. Youth from over 6 Northern California counties attended this no cost family camp to enjoy not only recreational activities intended to encourage personal development, team building, problem solving, and shared experiences, but they also had access to valuable life-skills education from professional trainer and presenters from around the country. Sponsored by agencies in both Lassen and Plumas counties such as Alliance for Workforce Development Inc., Independent Living Program, Environmental Alternatives Foster Family Agency, Kinship Care, Office of Education, Department of Probation, Department of Social Services and Plumas Crisis Intervention and Resource Center the two-day overnight event empowered families by offering them workshops throughout the weekend designed to also prepare youth and parents for one of the most important transitions in anyone’s lifetime; the transition from teenager to adulthood.

Educational breakout sessions included information on topics such as healthy relationships, college readiness, extended foster care benefits, and strength guided discipline. Alliance for Workforce Development Inc. (AFWD) gave an employment workshop on how to be prepared for working life. This workshop went over how to start the process of looking for work. Topics such as resume building, master applications, interview tips, and what to wear were reviewed. Advice on how to keep the job and eventually promote were also discussed. AFWD was also able to help the individual campers be prepared for the event by contributing backpacks, water bottles and flashlights.

Motivational speaker Travis Lloyd and “The Magician with a Message”, Eric Anderson attended the event. Both inspirational speakers entertained the guests with powerful messages of hope. Mr. Anderson’s advice “Regardless of your background and what you have gone through with the Magic of Attitude you can take the cards you are dealt and Live a Magical Life” was shared with all and adopted as the theme for the year.

Sponsors and participants agreed that the event was a resounding success and look forward to next year.
The Magic of Attitude
Y.E.S. - 2016

[Images of various outdoor scenes and activities related to the event]
Adult Program All-Staff Meeting

On Tuesday, September 20, 2016, the six-county Adult Programs team held an all-staff meeting in Susanville, where the adult staff had the opportunity of getting together to discuss program updates as well as participating in team building activities. With staff spread out over six Northern California counties, it was a fun-filled day that allowed the team to work in a group setting and get better acquainted with one another.

The Fiscal team gave an overview of fiscal processes that included information regarding how client-related expenses are processed, the monthly timing of processing client-related expenditures, etc. Program Manager, Kristine Farrell, provided WIOA updates and gave a thorough overview of program related topics such as; classroom training, on-the-job (OJT) training, the Federal WOTC tax credit, Career Pathways and the 15 Industry Sectors, and individual employment plan (IEP) language.

Luckily the day wasn’t all work and each employee was presented with a superhero-themed award based on their individual strengths. Kristine Farrell was surprised by her staff and was awarded the Wonder Woman award for her wisdom and leadership. She was presented with a certificate as well as an official Wonder Woman cape, tiara and lasso.

The consensus of the day was that the meeting was fun as well as very informative.
AFWD Connects with Students

The Lassen office of Alliance for Workforce Development, Inc. (AFWD) was invited by Lassen College to participate in their annual College and Career Fair. This event is an opportunity for Lassen College students and high school students from all over Lassen County to come speak to different college and university representatives and also different employers in the area. Some of the colleges and employers represented included CSU Chico, University of Nevada at Reno, UC Berkeley, the Lassen County Sheriff, California Department of Rehabilitation, and Lassen County Office of Education. A few of the departments at Lassen College featured their programs such as Graphic Design, Welding, and Automotive Technology.

Career Center Advisors from AFWD spoke with students about their post-secondary plans. Some of the students had definite career and college interests and some were not so sure. AFWD made available quick RIASEC Interest Assessments with related information about high growth occupations in each of the interest areas. The RIASEC display featured “bright outlook” jobs in which students could train at Lassen College. Students were given flyers featuring career exploration websites and all of AFWD’s career services for job seekers.
Just the Beginning . . .

In June of this year, Cree Drake came into the Lassen Business and Career Network looking for help with obtaining a high school diploma or equivalency with the plan to enroll in college. With the 2015-2016 school year complete in Lassen County, there weren’t many adult education options available to her at that time. She met with a Youth Career Advisor and was given information about Lassen Union High School District’s Adult Education program that would begin mid-August and information about the GED offered through the Lassen District Library.

After assessing Cree’s situation and needs, and discussing her goals and the possibilities available to her, she was enthusiastic to learn the different employment and training options for her through AFWD’s Youth Program. Not only had Cree left high school before finishing, she had no work experience, and is parenting an infant son. She has a compassion for helping others and a keen interest in someday working in the medical field. Cree completed several career assessments which confirmed her leaning toward the health and social services fields. Cree took and passed all but the Math GED pre-tests.

Cree’s Career Center Advisor assisted her with developing a resume and interviewing skills. Cree’s Advisor utilized the information provided on Cree’s GED pre-test profile to identify areas of math on which Cree could concentrate her studies. While working on job search and interviewing skills, Cree was amazingly diligent completing all math assignments given to her and reviewing math problems six to eight hours per week with her advisor. Cree took an additional GED Ready pre-test which showed her only four points shy of passing. With an agreement of an additional push to hone those math topics still giving her trouble, Cree went ahead and scheduled her test – and passed! When handed her diploma, Cree exclaimed, “I’m so happy, I could cry!”

Now with a high school equivalency in her hand, she can now pursue meaningful work and training opportunities. To help her gain some essential work experience, AFWD is assisting her with an Internship placement. At the time of this writing, a placement is in the initial phases with Lassen County Community Social Services. For a young woman with her kind of drive and perseverance, for Cree, this is just the beginning.
Staff members from all six Alliance for Workforce Development, Inc., (AFWD) counties attended the Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC) seminar in Chico on September 13, 2016. The information that was provided will assist in furthering AFWD’s goal to increase employment and assist local businesses. The WOTC for employers varies from $2400.00 to $9600.00 per qualifying employee, depending on which Eligibility Group the employee falls in.

*The WOTC has two purposes:*  
To promote the hiring of individuals who qualify as a member of a target group.  
To provide a federal tax credit to employers who hire these individuals.

**WHO IS ELIGIBLE?**  
Veterans  
TANF Recipients  
SNAP (Cal Fresh) Recipients  
Designated Community Residents  
Vocational Rehabilitation Referral  
Ex-Felons  
Supplemental Security Income Recipients  
Summer Youth Employees

It was announced that a new eligibility group had been added to the program on December 18, 2015, which is “Qualified Long-Term Unemployment.”

The WOTC Program has been re-authorized to continue through December 31, 2019 and new online processing has been introduced via eWOTC at [https://www.dolea.gov/wotc](https://www.dolea.gov/wotc). All employers with an emphasis on smaller employers with 24 employees or less, without agent/consultant representation, are also encouraged to submit new applications online. In addition, they still have the option to mail in the applications.

**The Positive Aspects of the WOTC:**  
Reduces an employer’s cost of doing business  
Requires little paperwork  
Applying for WOTC is simple  
WOTC can reduce an employer’s federal income tax liability by as much as $9,600 per eligible employee hired  
No limit on the number of new employees that can qualify for the tax credit, if the employees are eligible  
Certain tax-exempt organizations can take advantage of WOTC by hiring eligible veterans and receiving a credit against the employer’s share of Social Security taxes.

The Employment Development Department is the WOTC certifying agency for California employers.
## Lassen County Visitors

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<table>
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<tr>
<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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## AFWD Business Services

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<tr>
<td>Business Served</td>
<td>796</td>
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<tr>
<td>Positions Filled</td>
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## Program Services

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Total enrollments</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adult</td>
<td>135</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dislocated Worker</td>
<td>99</td>
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<tr>
<td>Youth</td>
<td>116</td>
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<tr>
<td>Employed</td>
<td>46</td>
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## Unemployment Rate

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Region</th>
<th>Rate</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Butte</td>
<td>6.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lassen</td>
<td>6.1%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Modoc</td>
<td>6.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nevada</td>
<td>4.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plumas</td>
<td>7.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sierra</td>
<td>6.7%</td>
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