Kelli Hallam was referred to the Alliance for Workforce Development in July of 2018. She had just completed her orientation as part of her acceptance into the Licensed Vocational Nursing Program with Lassen Community College (LCC). As part of the LVN program orientation, an announcement was made about AFWD services as a resource for LVN candidates to look into for assistance with vocational training. Kelli met with the Career Center Advisor, qualified for the program, and enrolled in the Adult program. Kelli’s pursuit of a career in Healthcare came from personal experiences that motivated her to work toward her goal of becoming a Licensed Vocational Nurse (LVN). Before relocating to the Susanville area Kelli earned a vocational certificate as a Surgical Technician in Washington State, but once she moved into California, the certification was no longer valid. She decided to obtain certification as a Certified Nursing Assistant (C.N.A.). Her C.N.A. certification led to a part-time position with Lassen Nursing and Rehabilitation Center. The part-time job worked well for her as she began attending Lassen Community College to complete her pre-requisites, for entry into the LVN program at LCC.

Kelli showed that she an enormous amount of determination in meeting her goal. She was accepted into the LVN program at LCC and with the support of her current employer, retained her employment as an on-call CNA. The Career Center Advisor was concerned she would not be able, to work and attend a very rigorous vocational training program at the same time. However, Kelli assured that she could pursue her training and keep her on-call status with work. She did just that! Kelli was at the top of her class, with compliments from the Director of Vocational Education. During her training, she participated with the class and on her own time to help out at the designated Camp Fire Disaster location that was caring for those who were displaced and fell ill. Upon graduating from the LVN program with Lassen Community College, she returned to work as a full-time CNA, while waiting to obtain her LVN permit and testing date for licensing. Kelli obtained her LVN licensing and was offered a full-time position as an LVN with Lassen Nursing Rehabilitation Center. She now has the means to support herself and her family. Kelli is a fantastic, energetic, and focused person with a heart for what she does, and serving those in need.

Congratulations!
Vision, Quest, Reality

In 2013, Michael Alvin had several visions, one was to complete Lassen College’s Gunsmith course, which he successfully did, and the other was to open his own business repairing and customizing firearms. In November of 2013 Michael came into the Business and Career Network with an opportunity to participate in the Lassen Microenterprise Technical Assistance program which assists microenterprise (5 or fewer employees including owners) and Entrepreneurs with a wide variety of business services tailored to each individual. Michael thoroughly utilized these services along with other resources available through the Veteran’s Administration, and in August of 2015, his company The Gun Works became a reality.

Michael was proactive in getting The Gun Works out to not only the local community but to the World Wide Web, using suggestions and tricks he obtained through the consulting of the professionals he met with in the Lassen Microenterprise Technical Assistance program. Michael stayed focused with his business and remained patient when times were slow. He understood the cost and required determination involved with growing your dream.

In the Spring of 2018 the Lassen County Microenterprise Technical Assistance program was launched again, previous participates where contacted and Michael was elated to have the opportunity to participate again as he was in the beginning stages of exploring expanding his business to include sales of firearms, accessories and ammunition.

Having the assistance and commitment of these business consultants has brought a new prospective on The Gun Works operation, reevaluating what was working well, what wasn’t. Michael shared, “just the different prospective on advertising from Laurie Wann such as being a presence at the Lassen County Fair allowed us to touch so many more people. In fact, we have developed approximately 160 more customers from that event alone. The response from so many we spoke to was they didn’t even know we were here, which was a real eye opener for us”.

Additionally, Michael stated, “the financial expertise of the financial team I was able to work with has allowed me to explore the expansion idea. We reviewed the potential income verses current income, researching the sustainability, feasibility and current competition of these services in our area. Digging down deep in what can The Gun Works bring to the table that isn’t already being offered”.

Michael continues to hone his business skills with the knowledge he has gained and is using this knowledge and confidence to move forward in his new venture.
Lassen Boot Camp Produces Five Graduates

The Lassen Business and Career Network offered a rigorous weeklong basic training in job search and work readiness. Five youth proved up to the task and accepted the challenge. Each day began with a warm up helping participants to learn about themselves, each other, goal setting, and team building. That was followed by a focus on a specific area of preparing them for the world of work.

Routine drill included the basics of job search such as creating a resume and a master application, using a job search log, and dressing appropriately. Participants developed their interviewing skills practicing typical questions and learning do’s and don’ts of the interview. They were mock-interviewed and critiqued by Alliance for Workforce Development staff.

Work readiness is not solely based on the ability to secure a job, but also the ability to retain employment. Participants gained an understanding of their strengths, job skills, and transferable skills. This was accomplished through the use of some fun assessments involving colors, shapes, birthdates, and the traditional RIASEC Work Interest Profiler. They were challenged to develop a budget based on working thirty hours per week at minimum wage. They had to develop a plan to meet their financial goals using that budget. Thinking of where they could be in five years, participants created vision boards using pictures, quotes, words, and their own artwork. They also viewed the FISH Philosophy video. Be there, play, make their day, and choose your attitude is the thinking of Seattle’s Pike Place fishmongers. They demonstrate how to turn a dull, monotonous job into a fun, effective, customer-focused career.

One entire day of Boot Camp was devoted to healthy habits and healthy relationships to gain work maturity. A League of Champions activity encouraged participants to choose their own league of champions: the people in their life who demonstrate the characteristics to keep a promise to them. Guest speakers from Lassen County Public Health SNAP Education presented healthy eating habits and engaged the participants in a nutritious smoothie making competition. They were followed by presenters from the Lassen County Sheriff’s Tobacco Education and Prevention team. Participants heard how smoking, vaping, and the use of marijuana affects health and the ability to work. Educators demonstrated meditation and breathing alternatives to use in place of cigarettes and marijuana.

continued
The final day of Boot Camp was a life skills activity involving budgeting, shopping, and public transportation. The objective was to create a weekly menu and a shopping list, get to the grocery store, and buy the items on the list staying within a budget of fifty dollars. Participants caught the city bus outside of the Business and Career Network. The bus was incredibly behind schedule that day which was a lesson in itself. Arriving at Grocery Outlet, the participants “shopped” making note of the prices of items on their shopping lists. All succeeded by staying within a fifty dollar budget.

Boot Camp concluded with a celebration including awards of certificates. Graduates evaluated the week stating that their favorite parts were the “laughter, the people, the vision boards, and the whole experience”.

“Aim for success, not perfection. Never give up your right to be wrong, because then you will lose the ability to learn new things and move forward with your life. Remember that fear always lurks behind perfectionism.”
David M. Burns
Time to Make a Change

Chrystal came to the Alliance for Workforce Development, Inc. (AFWD) office in Susanville, hoping to find assistance with completing her Licensed Vocational Nursing (LVN) training with Lassen Community College. She had been working as a Pre-School Teacher with a local Daycare facility since 2015. However, this work did not fulfill her calling to work in the medical field, caring for people who need care the most. She focused her education, time, and energy on her goals and desire to work in the Healthcare sector. First, she attended Lassen Community College, completing her AA Degree in Allied Health along with her LVN prerequisites, and was accepted into the LVN Training Program at Lassen Community College. She worked with her Career Center Advisor (CCA) at AFWD to create a training plan to assist her with items required for the program, and to keep her on track throughout the rigorous training. AFWD was able to provide Chrystal assistance with her required textbooks, as the books were her most significant expense. She was very resourceful in organizing her needs, and managing her personal life to complete this accelerated 10-month program.

During her LVN training, Chrystal had the opportunity to assist those who were affected by the Camp Fire Disaster. She traveled to Chico, CA with other LVN Trainees and instructors, and cared for those who became ill while evacuated from the Camp Fire Disaster. Up to this point, the class had been focusing on in-class learning, so to be able to see what Nursing was really about through the hands-on experience validated to Chrystal why she wanted to become an LVN. The amount of care and time working with people, and making the connections to those who really needed to have hope after such a devastating event provided a wealth of learning experience that could only be gained first-hand. Near the end of the LVN program, her CCA provided help with job search by providing Resume Development and Interviewing Techniques presentations to prepare Chrystal for seeking a position as an LVN with local Healthcare Providers.

Once Chrystal completed her LVN training and obtained her LVN Interim Permit, she began work with Lassen Nursing Rehabilitation Center (LNRC), in Susanville, CA. The facility worked with Chrystal to allow her the time to study and take her Board of Vocational Nursing test. She passed her test with flying colors and now works full-time as an LVN at LNRC, enjoying her job and fulfilling a purpose that she set her goals toward. Chrystal appreciates the assistance of AFWD’s services and feels that without it, the difficulty in coming up with the cost of textbooks would have kept her from completing her training.

Congratulations on a job well done, Chrystal!
The Youth Empowerment Summit (YES) is an annual overnight summer camp coordinated by multiple agencies: Independent Living Program; Lassen Community College Kinship; Lassen County Office of Education; Lassen County Probation; Lassen Health and Human Services; and Alliance for Workforce Development, Inc. (AFWD). The purpose of the event is to connect youth, families and supporters through shared experiences with recreation, fun activities, and being together. Workshops designed to break barriers by providing resources, life skills training, and tools for achieving success were given. The event targets at-risk teens and transitional age youth that have experienced foster care, kinship care, guardianship, and homelessness.

This year marked the 9th anniversary of YES, and was held at Camp Ronald McDonald at Eagle Lake. Participants from Tehama, Plumas, and Lassen attended. Magician, Eric Anderson, was the opening day keynote speaker. His message of overcoming life’s struggles resonated with the participants. Later that day, they enjoyed recreational activities and Fix-it City, which was where members of the community provided mini workshops designed to teach common life skills. Les Schwab was on hand to teach how to change a tire. Cleaning skills were demonstrated, and basic first aid and dental care were taught. AFWD staff helped the participants through an assessment to determine what kind of lifestyle they wanted and how much money they would need to earn to get that lifestyle. The kids enjoyed looking at the different jobs that they could get that paid the necessary salaries. They also had an opportunity to learn how to complete a job application.

The next day, AFWD staff facilitated a Career Fair. Nine local professionals were interview by participants to learn firsthand information on a variety of occupations. The participants were rotated every five minutes and were given a random card from a deck of cards after each interview. At the end of the event, the participants were helped to put together their best Career Card hand. The event winner won a prize. Professionals and participants alike joyed the time spent together. Special thanks to:

- Jeannie Muttera, Registered Dental Hygienist – Lassen County Public Health
- Helen May, Registered Nurse – Lassen County Public Health
- Chad Lewis, Automotive Instructor – Lassen Community College
- Shantel Thompson, Manager – US Bank Susanville
- Michael Mai, Lassen County sheriff’s Office
- Mark and Nick Delucchi, Owners – Delucchi Construction
- James Housel, IT Supervisor – Lassen County
- Dan Weaver, Fireman – City of Susanville Fire Department
- Becky Dixon-Jordan, Child Therapist – Lassen County Behavioral Health
A NEW CAREER WITH AN OLD TWIST

Karie was referred to the Alliance for Workforce Development (AFWD) after attending the Licensed Vocational Nursing (LVN) Program orientation at Lassen Community College (LCC). Karie met with a Career Center Advisor to see what possible services we could assist her with for her upcoming training. She had worked for the Lassen County Sheriff’s Office as a part-time Correctional Technician. Although Karie was working, the employment did not meet what she was needing to maintain her living expenses, and was not in line with her career path goals. She realized she needed to pursue a vocation that would provide her with an income and opportunities that would sustain her over time. Karie always had the desire to assist and help people and chose to obtain her license as an LVN. The Correctional Deputy position allowed her the opportunity to work on her transferable skills and to complete her prerequisites to enter into the LVN program at LCC.

AFWD was able to provide assistance to Karie for required costs of her LVN training program, and with obtaining her LVN licensure. During Karie’s training, Career Center Advisors presented Karie and her fellow LVN classmates with Resume Development and Interview Technique workshops to prepare LVN trainees in searching for an LVN job, once they completed training. The LVN students also had the opportunity to be part of mock interviews with local healthcare providers and AFWD staff, giving a boost to their potential employment opportunities.

Karie completed her training, gained her LVN licensing, and now works fulltime for a health subcontractor who provides care for inmates at the Lassen County Sheriff’s Office. She is receiving one of the highest-paid hourly rates in the local area for a working LVN straight out of an accredited vocational training program. Karie is very appreciative of the assistance that she was able to receive from AFWD. Before finding out about the potential for AFWD assistance, she thought she was going to have to wait to enter the program due to the costs involved. She is grateful for the incredible support she has received, and she is thrilled with her new career.
California Workforce Association

Meeting of the Minds

In early September, staff members from Alliance for Workforce Development, Inc. (AFWD) attended ‘Meeting of the Minds’ a training sponsored by the California Workforce Association, in beautiful Monterey, California. This training presented topics by industry leaders, relevant to the changes facing employers and job seekers alike. Businesses are facing unprecedented issues with jobs going unfilled and businesses creating temporary positions to meet the cyclical needs of their business. During the “Unseen Problems of Underemployed and The Gig Economy,” the speaker presented strategies for business to deal with the demands of the new economy.

In the training session “Preparing the Workforce of the Future,” the speaker addressed the many issues facing businesses in this new Gig Economy. With temporary workers in greater need, it is necessary to attract workers for these part-time temporary positions. Many older workers are staying in the workforce longer and often choosing part-time positions.

The first-time job seekers are wondering whether the high price of a 4-year college degree will meet their career aspirations economically. Creating apprenticeship programs for the trades in need of workers is one way employers are meeting the challenge of a retiring workforce in the trades. The session “New Apprenticeships and Pre-Apprenticeship Models in the Bay Area Public Utilities Industry: What’s Working and Why?” addressed the issues they are facing creating the training programs. This new model of training created in the Bay Area within the public utilities industry has been most useful.

Many businesses are deciding to grow their own employees through training. Integrity Heating, based out of Loyalton, decided to hire and train his employees in the HVAC industry. Now after a year of in-house training, the employees are able to service heaters and air conditioners by themselves. Frank Emsoff, owner, said, “It’s almost better training in-house because the employees can grow with the business. There are simply not enough HVAC experienced job seekers locally.”

With an economy of minimal unemployment, employers are challenged with finding new avenues of hiring. Workforce offices are helping businesses by identifying ways to reach both underemployed and new job seekers. The Institute for the Future indicates that 80% of the jobs in 2030 are not even invented yet. The session “Adaptability and Resilience – the new Model of Employment” addressed the changes in jobs citing Artificial Intelligence (AI) and automation are creating very new positions which often require On-The-Job training, in-house. We know this trend will continue in the foreseeable future.

The training sessions over the three-day Meeting of the Minds program offered attendees many new ways to assist employers facing the challenges faced in a Gig Economy, low unemployment, a diverse workforce and ever-changing job skills requirements.
2019 ALL STAFF
Shared Ideas, Shared Successes

On August 8, 2019 Alliance for Workforce Development Inc. (AFWD) hosted its annual All Staff meeting at the Chico Area Recreation District Community Center in Chico. AFWD Executive Director, Traci Holt addressed the staff to share updates to programs and processes for the coming fiscal year. She also shared with the nearly 90 AFWD employees present, the special honor of the CWA Charlie Brown Award that AFWD received in May at the WorkCon Conference in Anaheim CA. This award was bestowed on AFWD for its efforts in the Camp Fire recovery.

Business Service Director Amy Velazquez, and Youth Programs Director Heather Chavez presented client success stories from Youth and Adult programs. Christopher Fox is an enrollee in our Adult program, now employed with Allstate Insurance through an On the Job Training (OJT), and Desirae Fargo was an enrollee of our Youth Program who completed an Internship with AFWD as an Office Assistant in our Chico Office and was later hired as an Office Manager at All Star Towing in Chico, based on the skills she’d learned during her internship.

After the presentations, staff was treated to a fiesta—complete with a Taco Truck lunch and Treat Cart with elotes, raspados, and Mexican candy. There were games and activities for staff to enjoy, as well as the beautiful rose garden and greenway of the CARD Community Center. AFWD is grateful for all the good work our staff does for the communities we serve. Our impact on the clients and businesses we help every day, is a direct reflection of the hard work and dedication of the employees who make it happen.
JOB CORPS: A CAREER IS BEGINNING THERE

Blake Blakely was referred by the Lassen HEARTS Program to Alliance for Workforce Development’s Youth Program. Blake had relocated to Susanville from Oregon to live with his parents. His parents had moved here in 2018, but Blake had chosen to remain in Oregon with other family members in order to graduate from high school. His work experience had included a stint in retail and he had gained some hands-on experience by working in his family’s flooring business. Blake stated he was interested in working in the culinary field and all the assessments he completed pointed to that as a possible career direction.

Alliance for Workforce Development assisted Blake with developing a resume, application, and acquiring interviewing skills. He applied to several jobs in the area, had an interview or two, but nothing panned out. Blake was a most attentive and dedicated program participant. He asked many good questions and followed through on any advice he was given. With the interest in working in the Culinary Arts industry, AFWD arranged for him to take a tour of the culinary training program at Sierra Nevada Job Corps in Reno. Blake really liked the program and the facility at Job Corps. He was attracted to the college-like dorms, on-campus activities, and the options available to work on campus. Within a few days, he had applied to the program. He was immediately accepted into Job Corps and they wanted him to start within two weeks.

Before Blake left for Job Corps, they too assessed his interests. They require their participants to choose and complete orientation in three training programs. Based on their assessment, Blake chose culinary arts, electrical, and carpentry training. Once at Job Corps, and after about a month of trying the three training programs, Blake found he was more in tune with the electrical training than culinary arts. He said there would be more potential for job opportunities after he is trained. After almost four months into the training program, Blake states, “The training is going good and I’m actually getting good at this vocation”.

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Lassen County

On-Stop Visitors:
4,054

Businesses Served:
59

Business Services:
321

AFWD
Clients Enrolled:
368

Unemployment Rate
(As of: August 2019)
4.3%