A Never Give Up Attitude

Gabriela came to the Alliance for Workforce Development, Inc. (AFWD) in Susanville for assistance with the Lassen Community College Licensed Vocational Nursing (LVN) program. She had always wanted to work in the medical field, and determined that nursing would be a good career path for her. She had begun Lassen Community College LVN program previously, but had been unable to complete it. Because of her good standing, she was allowed to return to the program where she had left off. Gabriela met with a Career Center Advisor (CCA) and completed assessments, which showed her interests were in line with LVN positions in the healthcare sector, making her an excellent candidate for the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Adult program. Even when some protocols for the LVN program had to be modified due to Covid-19, Gabriela completed the LVN program at Lassen Community College May of 2020, with the assistance of AFWD.

Gabriela was interested in remaining in the Susanville area to work. While waiting to obtain her license, she began working at Northeastern Rural Health Clinics (NRHC) as a Medical Assistant with the plan of working as an LVN there once she became licensed. The NRHC staff had been impressed by her performance during the clinical portion of her training with them. She achieved her LVN license through the Board of Vocational Nursing and Psychiatric Technicians on July 30, 2020, and began working as an LVN shortly thereafter.

Gabriela has shown what hard work and determination can do. Determined not to give up on her dreams, she pushed beyond a difficult time and created her own success. Congratulations, Gabriela!
Social Media Strategies During Economic Shutdown

With the increased needs of our business clients due to economic shutdown, Northern Rural Training and Employment Consortium (NoRTEC), staff and Service Provider Directors implemented an action plan to enhance and support our businesses throughout the NoRTEC region. Recent surveys indicated that an area that needed more light shed on it was adapting business models and practices to new business realities. A relationship was established with a north state firm; Kate & Company Marketing + Collaboration. Because NoRTEC listened to the business's needs and in their continuing efforts to promote economic stability; small business owners in the north state region were invited to a series of no-cost Social Media Strategies presented by Kate & Co.

Social Media Marketing does turn sales. Facebook is the biggest of all the social networks, Instagram is second. 87.1% of U.S. marketers will use Facebook in 2020, and 75.3% will use Instagram. It’s a constantly evolving platform based on algorithm changes, new tools, and shifting demographics. Effective Facebook marketing requires an understanding of the latest Facebook statistics and how they apply to social marketing strategy. In three video sessions, Kate and her crew took attendees on an in-depth virtual look at social media marketing focused on how small businesses can break through the social media “noise” to create a strong and successful online game.

Video One: Social Media Planning – Three essential themes were addressed that dismantle personal challenges and support the creation of a solid social media action plan. Advice to construct a "business story," (aka brand), then they shared systems for a manageable posting plan, outlined effective evaluation techniques, and more.

Video Two: Social Media Content - Explored the social media content areas that provide small businesses with the best value and walked through proven practices that not only motivate and engage customers but also grow a digital presence.

Video Three: Social Media Hacks – Kate & Co pulled out all the stops in the final video, sharing countless game-changing hacks. They shared how to engage influencers and specific posting guidelines, using cross-promotion and helpful apps, and showcased all sorts of juicy insider tips. Then they proved its effectiveness by taking viewers on a virtual tour of six Northern California businesses to pull back the curtain on a unique collection of best practices and social media “wins.”

Thank you to NoRTEC and Kate & Co. it was a win for everyone that attended.
A “Noble” Pursuit

Something people never imagined was having to job search during a pandemic. When you have recently relocated to a new area and have precarious housing, job searching can be overwhelming. This is what Anthony Martinez was facing when he sought out the assistance of Alliance for Workforce Development, Inc. (AFWD). He discussed his situation with a Career Center Advisor (CCA). The CCA reviewed the Youth Program with him and he realized immediately that this was the help that he needed. Working quickly, they were able to create a professional resume, make a job search plan and review interview techniques. Anthony needed employment right away to stabilize his housing situation and create a life in Susanville. Many employers were closed due to COVID-19, yet Anthony never gave up and put in many applications. He was hoping for a job that was active or one involving computers. With his CCA’s help, Anthony applied and was interviewed at Noble’s Construction Components (NCC).

NCC is a unique local business that creates “modular” high-rise apartment buildings locally and ships and assembles them on-site in various locations in the Bay Area and other locations. Although the business appreciated Anthony’s determination, they were concerned that he really had no experience in construction. His Career Advisor discussed a possible on-the-job training with Nobles and they readily agreed. Assistance was also provide to him work clothing and sturdy boots. Anthony started his new job on July 1. Since then, his progress has been remarkable and he has already received a raise and a promotion! When an entry-level Civic Draftsman position came available, Anthony applied. Already impressed with Anthony’s work ethic, and the progress that he made in his on-the-job training, NCC decided to give Anthony a shot.

The on-the-job training was reformatted to accommodate the new position. Anthony is currently learning skills that many companies would require a Bachelors of Arts in Engineering to obtain. It is an amazing opportunity. Stay tuned for additional updates on Anthony’s career journey.
Personal Protective Equipment for Lassen County Businesses

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) supplies were dispensed on Monday, September 28th from 10:00am to 1:00pm utilizing the Lassen County Fairgrounds main parking lot. This event was provided through the California’s Governor’s Office of Emergency Services in collaboration with the Office of the Small Business Advocate.

Alliance for Workforce Development (AFWD) staff and the Lassen County Chamber of Commerce members volunteered with distributing hand sanitizer and surgical masks to Lassen County businesses at no-cost to the business community. Distribution was a drive thru set up with business’s sharing how many were on staff and getting supplies according to the business needs.

Volunteers directed cars as they entered the parking lot into two lanes. Each lane had several volunteers taking down the business name and number of employees, gather the needed supplies, and load them into each vehicle. The setup allowed the volunteers to serve the business needs in a timely manner. Each business was allocated one box containing 50 masks per employee and one 16oz bottle of hand sanitizer per employee, a 30+ day supply.

Penny Artz, Lassen Senior Services Director express, “this event is so beneficial for not only our organization but the small business owners who have struggled in finding affordable supplies”.

During the 3-hour event, supplies were distributed to 71 of Lassen County’s businesses, all were very grateful for the assistance.
Go Teams, Go!

With meeting CDC guidelines of social distancing, Lassen Youth are enjoying the “in person” benefits of meeting with their Career Center Advisors via Microsoft Teams. Rather than sitting across a desk or table, they sit across a computer camera/microphone. With document and website sharing capability of Teams, Youth can complete online career, personal, and financial literacy assessments and develop their service strategy with their CCA.

Resume development and master applications can be accomplished together electronically. Various websites can be shared that help Youth manage money, explore careers, and develop their interviewing skills. The Teams concept allows the personal contact that Youth clients crave and require, but also gives them the opportunity to use technology at which they excel. And, to again follow CDC guidelines, after each meeting, the client computer workspace area is sanitized and made ready for the next participant.

Overcoming COVID Delays

Crystal saw a flyer for Alliance for Workforce Development, Inc. on social media. She contacted a Career Center Advisor in the Susanville office for potential Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act (WIOA) services. She decided to enroll in the Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA) program Lassen Community College early this year. Prior to entering the CNA program, Crystal had had been laid off from her Customer Service Representative position, where she had worked for over 2 years, and was receiving unemployment benefits. She had no prior experience in the medical field. Crystal met with a Career Center Advisor (CCA) in the Lassen Office for possible classroom training assistance. Together, they completed assessments to determine her need for support and her likelihood of success in completing her training.

Crystal’s assessments showed her work preferences were compatible with CNA positions in the healthcare sector, making her an outstanding match for the WIOA Dislocated Worker program. Crystal studied hard and completed the CNA program in February of this year. Due to delays in testing due to the Covid-19 pandemic, Crystal was unable to take her state exam to become certified for several months. For a few months, she worked as a private caregiver, then found out that she would be able to work as a Nursing Assistant at Lassen Nursing and Rehabilitation Center (LNRC) without the certification for a limited time until she was able to take the exam.

She was finally able to take and pass the Nursing Assistant Certification exam and achieved her certification in August of 2020. She has been working at LNRC as a Certified Nursing Assistant since then, following her favorite quote by Charles Dederich: “Today is the first day of the rest of your life.”
California Workforce Association

Many “firsts” have happened in 2020 including the necessity to hold California Workforce Association’s (CWA) annual “Meeting of the Minds” in a virtual format instead of in the beautiful location of Monterey, CA. CWA organizers formatted a diverse scope of professionals that offered workforce development teams various tools and resources to assist with the challenging situations many job seekers, businesses and organizations have been facing since COVID-19 economic shelter in place directives began.

Larry Robbin, Executive Director, Robbin, and Associates shared Recruiting Populations You Have Not Served Before! Building Pathways to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion! This took attendees on a thorough review of who is coming to services, who is not, and then most importantly why aren’t they coming and how to correct to gain populations previously missed.

Presentations from other California Workforce Development providers offered best practices for a wide array of programs, demographic challenges, and technology challenges for rural communities. This new virtual delivery opened the door to attending topics at your own pace instead of having to choose one presentation over another due to conflicting time slots, participants could attend all presentations.

One attendee commented, “to be able to learn from all these professionals, have resources provided and ask questions of the presenters even after the conference had completed has allowed me to review the resources and go back and review the presentation to ensure my understanding is accurate”.

The California Workforce Association presents:
MEETING OF THE MINDS 2020
CRITICAL IMPACT
SEPT. 8 - 10, 2020
Youth Summit Kickoff for Suicide Prevention Training

Living Works, the world leader in suicide prevention programs including SafeTalk and ASIST, has partnered with the California State Department of Education (CDE) to offer students and staff Living Works Start. Living Works Start is a 90-minute online interactive training that teaches both youth and adults to recognize signs and prevention of suicide. On September 15th, the CDE kicked off the training with Youth Summit, a live state-wide program featuring young celebrities who shared their own struggles with mental health and teen suicide survivors who described their experiences.

The program was emceed by actress and comedienne Caitlin Reilly. She introduced stars well-known to Generation Z such as 17-year-old Lexi Underwood. Underwood candidly described some of her own childhood mental health issues and how they followed her into the start of her own career. Aileen Xu, known as blogger Lavendaire, shared her personal experience and the advice of “cultivate your relationship with yourself” and “to be kind to yourself”. Teen singer and dancer Tate McRae performed a song written for the summit “Don’t Be Sad”. Emma Benoit, while a beautiful and popular teen in high school, survived a suicide attempt that paralyzed her. Now age 20, she shared her personal story. Benoit stated that after she had shot herself, she immediately regretted it saying, “I didn’t want to live more than the day I was dying”.

Other celebrities featured included LGBTQ youth advocate Sam Brinton, International Slam Dunk Champion Kenny Dobbs, and magician Shin Lim. They all imparted their personal stories with mental health issues and/or suicide attempts, and provided advice and counsel to today’s youth. Rick Trimp, the president of Living Works, concluded that in today’s world the need for suicide prevention training is ten times greater than the need for CPR training.
Lassen County

One-Stop Visitors: 2,761

Businesses Served: 70

Business Services: 225

AFWD Clients Enrolled: 130

Unemployment Rate (As of: August 2020) 6.7%