Feather River Adult Education Consortium (FRAEC) had their grand opening on Wednesday, September 20, 2019, in Quincy, CA. Alliance for Workforce Development, Inc. (AFWD) was there when they opened their doors to the community. The AFWD Youth Career Center Advisor (CCA) had the pleasure of attending with a local youth who is seeking his General Education Diploma (GED). As he began his path to gainful employment, he realized that this certificate would be a great benefit to him. Upon entering the new facility located in Downtown Quincy, AFWD’s CCA and Youth client were greeted by Director, Michelle Abramson, and Adult Education Coordinators, Brad Miller and Karen Miller. They felt instantly comfortable and welcomed.

AFWD’s CCA and client were able to speak with Brad and Karen on a one-on-one basis. Brad and Karen were able to share their knowledge on Adult Education, and the different services available to individuals seeking their GED. The new FRAEC building is an exciting addition to the community of Quincy. The facility has a welcoming lobby, large meeting room to assist with groups, and new computer lab. To date, they have 80 students enrolled in the various Adult Education programs and enrolled four new students at Grand Opening. AFWD looks forward to a continued partnership with FRAEC; building a stronger community one individual at a time with the power of Education.
Early in August 2019, Josh and Jelly Wilson came into Quincy Alliance for Workforce Development Inc.’s (AFWD) office. They had driven down from Salem, Oregon to look at the construction of the new Grocery Outlet Bargain Market store in East Quincy. Josh and Jelly were the new owner/operators of the GO, which was going to be opened sometime the end of October or the beginning of November. As new owner/operators of GO store, they wanted to become part of the community. They would need to hire between 28 and 35 people for the new store, and were seeking local assistance in that endeavor.

AFWD staff provided a thorough overview of the service available for their new business. Discussion and coordination of the recruitment needs were top priority and while the store was under constructed an interest list was compiled by AFWD. Interested job seekers were encouraged and assisted with their resumes to be ready when the actual recruitment began.

A Hiring Event was coordinated and AFWD staff assisted with applications, scheduling interviews and check-in which resulted in over 35 people receiving job offers.
The Grand Opening was held November 7, 2019 and hundreds of the community members showed up. The first 200 people received a discount coupon for shopping. There was a festive air to this opening complete with DJ playing music. Lori Simpson, Plumas County Supervisor, was present for the ribbon cutting and to open up the festivities. Josh and Jelly gave a $1500 check to Plumas Crisis Resource Intervention Center, with Johanna Downey Executive Director, on hand to accept this generous gift. Josh explained Grocery Outlet wanted to contribute to the Quincy community: “The people of Quincy have been so welcoming to us.”

Jelly mentioned, “We could not have had such a successful hiring event without the help of AFWD staff. We were traveling between Oregon and Quincy for two months before opening. We are so happy with the people we were able to hire.”

AFWD was happy to assist Grocery Outlet in recruitment. With Josh and Jelly as owner/operators of this new store, they are sure to be a success providing new jobs for job seekers and a fresh new store to the community.
Lexi and her family had recently moved here from Idaho after they had come to Quincy for a large music festival that is held annually in the town. They fell in love with Quincy so they decided to pull up their roots and plant them in Quincy. Lexi’s husband was able to find work right away, but Lexi had a more difficult time. Someone recommended that she come in and visit the Plumas Business and Career Network (BCN) to assist in looking for help in finding a full-time job. She was given an overview of Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act (WIOA) services. Lexi’s past employment included being a Production Manager/Head Strategist for a farm in Idaho, as well as a Harvest Manager, and she also had Customer Service experience. After meeting with a Career Center Advisor (CCA), Lexi was determined eligible under the WIOA Adult program and she was assisted with Job Search and Placement.

With the help of her CCA, Lexi worked on her resume and did some extensive job searching. She applied for various jobs in the Quincy area for different employers. She had been to a few different interviews for part time positions, but her goal was to obtain full time work. She was finally called to interview for a full time position at Friden Optometry as an Office Technician. Lexi’s CCA went over interview techniques with her, and she went to the interview feeling very prepared. They offered her the job on the spot and she accepted the position.

Lexi has been very grateful for the help that the Alliance for Workforce Development Inc. (AFWD) has been able to give her. She feels like she and her family made the right decision to make the move so far from their hometown without knowing a soul, and making a fresh start in a community they loved from the first time they came here. AFWD Staff were very happy to help Lexi during this time and wish her the best in her journey in her new town.
Cultural Competence Workshop

On Thursday, October 10, 2019 service providers from Alliance for Workforce Development Inc., (AFWD) local health care, Behavioral Health, Social Services, Educators, Law Enforcement and Domestic Violence Services in Plumas County were treated to an excellent cultural competence workshop provided by Plumas Rural Services. Speakers from Veterans, Native American and LGBTQIA2S+ spoke about the diverse experiences, strengths and needs of these special populations. The aim was to better understand their challenges so that providers can take practical actions to improve services.

CPT Rev. Curtis Ketenburg, M. Div, LCSW from the California State Military Department, introduced the audience to the concept of Military Ethos and military organizations and their roles. He highlighted possible stressors and then reviewed resources for service members and veterans. It was interesting to learn about military culture and their core values. CPT Ketenburg also went over data, pointing out the alarming rate of service-connected disabilities. One reason, he said, for the dramatic increase, is that what would have likely killed a service man 20 years ago, doesn’t today due to technology. He said that 49% of service members who screened positive for mental health conditions indicated that they “would be seen as weak” if they sought mental health treatment.

To deal with this mindset, CPT Ketenburg made suggestions on how to help affected service members get the help that they need. More information and resources can be found at https://calguard.ca.gov/
Cultural Competence Workshop - Continued

Calvin Hedrick, Cultural Director of the 5th Direction, also spoke about the Native American cultural beliefs and their impact, traditions, and assimilation. He explained that there are 537 recognized tribes, all with their own different cultures. There are 111 federally recognized tribes in California alone, with the highest concentration in San Diego County.

He captivated the audience by explaining historical accounts and how reservation standards versus Western standards are often vastly different and should be considered when providing services.

Lastly, Marin Hambly, Advocacy and Education Coordinator for Stonewall Alliance of Chico, touched on how trauma, gender identity, and sexual orientation are all equally important when assisting the transgender community. Marin made suggestions on what to avoid and how to address certain issues using the appropriate language. The audience played an interactive game on terms and definitions and it was clear that many benefitted from the information. According to the 2015 U.S. Transgender Survey, 30% of respondents who had a job reported being fired, denied a promotion, or experiencing some other form of harassment towards them because they were transgender, and 8% were kicked out of the house because they were transgender. These statistics made it clear that this population needs special consideration in regards to services.

Overall, the workshop was informative and enlightening. Audience members left with a new insight on the challenges facing these special populations and a few new tools to do so.
New Store, New Job, New Adventure

Stephanie had come into the Plumas Business and Career Network (BCN) looking to obtain full time employment. She had been utilizing the Career Services in the computer lab and checking the job boards over a period of time. She had initially been enrolled with Alliance for Workforce Development, Inc. (AFWD) as a Dislocated Worker for assistance as a job seeker under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). Stephanie’s most recent job was as a Patient Services Representative with the local hospital district. She had continued doing extensive job searching and submitted many applications in various locations.

During the course of her search, she was informed of the impending grand opening of a new Grocery Outlet store that was being built here in Quincy. She had previous extensive experience in the retail business and she enjoyed it. She was excited to apply for a position in this new store, in a capacity she was very familiar with.

After Stephanie submitted her application and resume to Grocery Outlet, the owners invited her to a local hiring event. Stephanie was one of the first individuals to be chosen and offered a position from the large applicant pool. They started her out as a full time grocery clerk, and after proving her drive and skills, she will be eligible to move into a management position. She is making a good starting hourly wage, and is working full time. She has really put her all in to show the owners of the store her worth!

The owners of Grocery Outlet have been very happy with Stephanie’s progress and the motivation she brings to the entire team. Things are going very well for Stephanie, and she is very grateful for the opportunity that AFWD and the assistance of the WIOA program were able to afford her.
Many Accomplishments from One Determined Client

Lauren had previously obtained her Pharmacy Technician’s License, and she worked in the local hospital’s pharmacy lab. While working there, she observed the nurses and became very interested in the jobs that they were doing. She then went back to school and obtained her AA Degree in General Education, where she completed all of her pre-requisites for the Registered Nursing (RN) program. She also took and passed the Certified Nursing Assistant Program, which was a requirement to enter the RN program. Lauren came into the Business and Career Network (BCN) in January of 2018 seeking assistance. She was enrolled in the Registered Nursing program at Butte College, but was unable to meet all of her training expenses. She inquired about possible assistance with some of her remaining training costs. She was enrolled into the Adult program under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act (WIOA), and received assistance with her training expenses, and support during the program from her Career Center Advisor (CCA). Lauren completed her RN training and went on to pass her National Council Licensure Examination (NCLEX): A first accomplishment!

After achieving her licensure, her CCA continued in helping Lauren with her job search, and at that time she applied at the local Plumas District Hospital (PDH). The Business Service Representative (BSR) from the BCN spoke with representatives from PDH about a possible On-the-Job Training (OJT) with Lauren at the hospital. The BSR confirmed that PDH was interested in hiring Lauren, and although Lauren’s training provided her with some transferable skills, giving her a good foundation for a career in the nursing industry, the Head Nurse was concerned with the fact that Lauren lacked the necessary working experience for the position of a Registered Nurse. The staff at the BCN worked with PDH and put together an employment plan for Lauren that would provide her with the abilities and knowledge required to become employed as a Registered Nurse. A new job and an OJT with a local employer: A second accomplishment!

Lauren began her OJT on April 22, 2019. Her supervisor was immediately impressed with how well Lauren progressed in her knowledge of nursing practices and learning new skills. Throughout the OJT, she was exposed to many different tasks that she picked up and mastered in a quick and prompt manner, demonstrating her aptitude for the position. Lauren and the employer were both grateful for the opportunity that had been provided to them through Alliance For Workforce Development, Inc. A happy employer and employee: A third accomplishment! Here is to Lauren continuing her fruitful path to a long and successful career! Her hard work has paid off in a big way.
Labor Law Workshop 2020

With 2020 on the horizon and new laws effecting California employers the first Labor Law Update Workshop was held at The Training Place/Butte College in Chico on December 4, 2019. This presentation was filled with many new rules and laws impacting employers as of January 1, 2020. Ann Wicks, the presenter, is a Labor Law attorney whose practice includes all aspects of employment law. Her experience includes start-ups, venture capital firms, and other large and small businesses. In recent years, her focus has been on growing businesses in Northern California.

This year’s workshop covered the new wage and hour changes, various issues surrounding the independent contractors, training requirements for firms on harassment, discrimination and retaliation, the new lactation accommodation rules and other newly enacted laws for 2020. One of the unusual laws passed was the Crown Act which dealt with hairstyles. This new rule creates a respectful and open workplace for natural hair. California is the first state to ban discrimination against natural hair styles. Ms. Wicks suggested, "Employers should update their dress/grooming policies to comply with the CROWN Act and review their handbooks to make sure all of their policies comply with the newly enacted laws."

Another new rule of interest is the Lactation Accommodation. Employers with 5 or more employees must provide a lactation location - other than a bathroom, in close proximity to the employee’s workplace and allow employee to express milk in private. The employer must also provide a sink with running water and a refrigerator or other cooling devise suitable for storing milk.

Each year, the Labor Law Workshop presents an overview of the changes employers can expect for the new year. This year is particularly challenging, as there were a broad spectrum of rules including organ donation leave of absence, the Sexual Harassment Prevention training requirements, and the ‘No Rehire’ clause for workers who sue their employer and settle their case. Again, Ms. Wicks cautioned employers to review their HR policies.

This year was no exception to the realizing that doing business in California presents its challenges. With the lower unemployment rates, many employers are currently offering higher wages and better accommodations in order to attract better qualify employees. This early 2020 Labor Law workshop saw new employers attending for the first time. Collectively, the participants agreed the information shared was very informative.
Allen Oglesby came into Alliance for Workforce Development Inc. (AFWD) this summer looking for assistance with job search. At the time, he was struggling with his recent obligations to probation. Feeling overwhelmed, staff suggested he participate in the Youth Program. After review, Allen agreed that this would help him to stay on track and aid in his employment search.

Allen and his Youth Career Center Advisor (CCA) commenced in creating a job search plan and a professional resume. Realizing that he had no other resource for appropriate job search clothing, his CCA assisted him in acquiring them through the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). They reviewed interview skills and Allen put those skills to practice by participating in a mock interview, during which time Allen could practice responses to interview questions he might be asked.

During this time, Allen was submitting as many applications that he could, hoping to find work that would keep him active. Lucky for him, the newly established Grocery Outlet in Quincy needed a crew to help set up and open their new store. Allen interviewed and was hired on the spot. Allen loves his new job and feels that the crew has become “family.” As a stocker/forklift driver, he is kept busy. His new job helps him to meet his obligations with probation and Allen is excited to move on.
The Small Business Development Center (SBDC) of Northern California was instrumental in putting together a Small Business Workshop in Lassen, Modoc and Plumas counties. This workshop included presentations by the Small Business Administration (SBA), California Capital Procurement Technical Assistance Center (PTAC), US Bank, and Alliance for Workforce Development, Inc. (AFWD). Small businesses and those interested in starting a new business were welcome to attend this free informative workshop. Whether a start-up just beginning a new venture or a small business looking to expand, this free workshop was designed to provide the business owner with a variety of resources.

Those in attendance ranged from people starting a gluten free bakery, a businessman who developed a special utilization of GPS software, to an outfit with outdoor biking tours and a new restaurant with unique Latin American cuisine. All businesses are well suited to our rural Northern California communities. Each agency presented an overview of their services. PTAC gave a lengthy overview describing the free services available to assist small and new business owners to navigate Federal, State, and local government procurement process. There are many websites posting requests for bids on Federal, State, and local contracts. James Aldea, Procurement Counselor explained, “When you know the website and learn the process, bidding on lucrative contracts is not so daunting. We are here to help you every step of the way.”

The local representative from US Bank went over the how banks make their decision on new business owners requesting credit, loans, and in some cases, grants. There are many funding sources available for every type of business. Several business owners in the audience asked questions about who and where to apply for funding, including grants.

The SBA representative for Northern California, David, spoke about various Federal services available to small businesses and start-ups. The SBA works with many different business agencies and will help the business owner by recommending the appropriate agencies. Many business owners stayed for question and answers specific to their business. The presenters were happy to share their insights with this diverse group of entrepreneurs.

Matt Merrill commented, “I had no idea there were this many resource applicable to my outdoor touring company. I know my industry but the business aspect is often confusing, this workshop really helped open my eyes.”
AFWD America’s Job Center of California

Statistics
PY 2019-2020 Q2

Plumas County

One-Stop Visitors:
1,711

Businesses Served:
64

Business Services:
423

AFWD
Clients Enrolled:
674

Unemployment Rate
(As of: November 2019)
6.0%