



from the executive director

This year, Fresno County residents have been overwhelmed with uncertainty – the decline of the U.S. economy; a water crisis that crippled the Valley’s prosperous ag industry and left hundreds, if not thousands, jobless; double digit unemployment rates; the subprime mortgage crisis and record foreclosures; and California’s 85-day state budget impasse, to name a few. Through it all, Fresno County EOC has been hard at work trying to ease the toll these crises have taken on low-income individuals and families in Fresno County.

From establishing a medical transportation company to growing a farming operation and landscaping company, the new Fresno Community Development Financial Institution (Fresno CDFI) is providing low-interest loans and business development services to entrepreneurs with a dream of starting or expanding a business. In “Making Dreams Come True,” find out how one Fresno businessman has benefited from these services and how Fresno CDFI is helping reduce the unemployment rate.

We are also helping make dreams a reality for employees with the vision, talent, and passion to succeed and take on leadership roles within the Agency. Over the years, our executive staff and Board Commissioners have worked hard to make EOC the service provider and Agency it is today. It would be foolish and irresponsible of us not to take measures to ensure the Agency’s future success and wellbeing. In “Maximum Impact: Training Tomorrow’s Leaders Today,” discover how EOC is empowering its emerging leaders and preparing them for future managerial positions within EOC.

Finally, we decided to end this volume of Change with a positive and uplifting story for the holiday season. Earlier this year, our

Sanctuary Youth Shelter began a “Room Adoption Project” – a beautification project where a room, sponsored by a business or individual, was painted and redecorated with a youth-friendly theme. I am grateful to all the businesses and individuals who generously donated money to the project and to those who were giving of their most precious resource, their time. Learn how the Room Adoption Project is brightening the spirits of homeless, runaway, and displaced youth in “Makeover Transforms Youth Shelter: From Simple to Sensational.”

This will be an extremely difficult holiday season for many individuals and families who were affected by the drought and economic meltdown; some will not have a home to celebrate the holidays while others will not have the luxury to afford a holiday meal. Please donate your gently used clothes and nonperishable food items to local charities or you can make monetary donations to EOC’s Crisis Relief Fund online at www.eoccrisisrelieffund.org, by phone at 263.1030, or mail tax-deductible contributions payable to Crisis Relief Fund to EOC Crisis Relief Fund, 1920 Mariposa Mall, Suite 310, Fresno, CA 93721. Your contributions will bring relief to dozens of parents trying to make this holiday season as “normal” as possible for their children.

As always, I thank you for your ongoing support of EOC and our community.

Warm regards,

Roger Palomino
Executive Director

Makeover Transforms Youth Shelter: From Simple to Sensational

A fresh coat of paint, colorful bed spreads, matching accessories, and creative murals have brought warmth to a place that can be filled with sorrow. EOC’s Sanctuary Youth Shelter – the only self-referral emergency shelter for homeless, runaway, exploited, or otherwise displaced teens in the Valley – began undergoing a mini-makeover this fall thanks to sponsorships from caring businesses and community members.



ID III student presents design concept to Carol Velez, Jody Ketcheside, and Imelda Golik.

“The walls in the bedrooms were bare and the entire Shelter felt almost institutional,” says Sanctuary Youth Services Director Stacie Hines.

Already on a strict budget, Hines and Sanctuary Youth Shelter Manager Jody Ketcheside developed the Sanctuary Room Adoption Project. “We asked individuals and companies to sponsor one of our bedrooms, common areas, counseling offices, or the intake area,” explains Ketcheside. “A \$1,000 contribution allowed us to purchase new bedding, furniture, décor, and paint for each room which was decorated in the sponsor’s theme of choice.” A plaque recognizing the sponsor’s contribution was also placed in each room.

Ketcheside admits that getting room sponsorships was half the battle. “I thought, ‘Okay, we have the money, now we’re going to need some help

decorating these rooms,’” she explains. “We were extremely lucky to have been able to partner with Carol Velez, a seasoned interior designer with Contract Interiors; Imelda Golik, a registered architect and Fresno State professor; and students from Design Presentation Techniques (ID 111) in the CSUF Department of Art and Design.”

“This project was a perfect, real world experience for my students,” says Professor Golik. “They designed a room, which included a mural, and presented their concept to the Shelter’s staff for consideration. This is exactly what my students will be doing in the professional arena.” She adds, “The added benefit for my students: they were able to do something positive for their community through their work and creativity.”

Interior designer Carol Velez, who introduced Sanctuary staff to Professor Golik, volunteered her time, talents, and expertise by advising Sanctuary staff on color selection for each room and helped seek furniture and accessory donations from colleagues and companies. “Even though the set up of each room is identical, each room boasts its own identity with an original design that appeals to teenagers,” says Velez. “I wanted to really create a retreat for these teens while having them feel like the room was designed specifically for them.”

For 15 year-old Rose, the redesigned rooms are a welcoming touch. “This doesn’t feel like the same place I visited a few months ago. It feels more alive in here,” she says. To Rose, the beach-themed room offered her an emotional escape. “You can picture yourself in that painting [the mural] and daydream about being at the beach,” she adds.

From the muralist to the interior designers, everyone’s efforts will be showcased during ArtHop on Thursday, December 4, 2008, from 5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. “ArtHop not only gives us the opportunity to show off everyone’s hard work, but also provides us the opportunity to continue our outreach efforts and educate the community on the variety of youth services we offer,” says Hines. The community is invited to the unveiling. The Shelter is located at 1545 “N” Street in downtown Fresno.

At the time this article was written, Hines and Ketcheside noted that their project is far from complete. The two were still looking for sponsorships of one room and three common areas. “Our goal is to find a few more sponsors so we can show off the entire Shelter during ArtHop,” expresses Ketcheside. “We understand

that a \$1,000 contribution could be intimidating; so, we encourage donations in any amount.”

EOC’s Sanctuary Youth Shelter – a 20 bed facility (10 female / 10 male) – provides displaced youth, ages 11 to 17, with emergency shelter, a hot meal, clothing, crisis intervention, counseling, and family reunification. It is the only self-referral shelter between Bakersfield and Modesto.

For more information on the Sanctuary Youth Shelter or the Sanctuary Room Adoption Project, please contact Jody Ketcheside at 498.8543.



EOC and Sanctuary staff would like to thank the following individuals and companies for their contribution to the Room Adoption Project:

- Anonymous Donor
- Bakman Water
- Carol Velez, Contract Interiors
- CSUF’s EMBA Cohort 5
- Fresno Grizzlies
- Imelda Golik, CSUF Department of Art and Design
- Jose Lopez
- Mohawk
- Nevin Gehris
- Paul McClain-Lugowski
- Ryan Puckett
- Sarah Worthen
- Sherwin Williams
- Saint Agnes Medical Center
- Team JAB

Fresno County
Economic Opportunities Commission
1920 Mariposa Mall, Suite 300
Fresno, CA 93721
www.fresnoecc.org



Feature Story EOC’s Fresno Community Development Financial Institution

Making Dreams come True

EOC is an integral catalyst of positive change in our community. We are helping people and changing lives through various events and services.

EOC continues to explore new ways to inspire change and make our community a better place. In just the past few months EOC has been responsible for instituting real change.

in this issue

Making Dreams Come True

EOC's new Fresno Community Development Financial Institution, or Fresno CDFI, is giving entrepreneurs a chance to live their dreams; the financial institution's loans are making it easier for business men and women to start, strengthen, or expand their businesses.

Maximum Impact: Training Tomorrow's Leaders Today

Fresno County EOC is helping its employees grow personally and professionally. Discover what the Agency is doing to encourage and promote tomorrow's leaders.

Makeover Transforms Youth Shelter: From Simple To Sensational

Community members contribute time and money, giving EOC's Sanctuary Youth Shelter a makeover that brightens up more than just rooms, but the spirits of distraught teens.

Fresno County Economic Opportunities Commission



Making Dreams Come True

When Manuel Gonzalez was a teenager, he helped his father transform a front yard that was not landscaped into a sea of color using flowers and plants. Years later, after mastering the trade and earning his state contractor's license, Manuel – who followed his father's footsteps and became a landscape designer – opened his own business, Premier Landscape.



A Premier Landscape employee landscapes a commercial development in Madera.

"I started my business with a pick and a shovel," jokes the 25-year-old. "In all seriousness, I worked hard. I built up my clientele by knocking on every door in new developments and introducing myself and my business to the new homeowners." Business was good for the young entrepreneur, but he hit a bump in the road when he was ready to expand his company – he didn't have the money to purchase materials, supplies, and equipment in order to bid on larger scale landscaping projects. "I started from scratch," explains Gonzalez. "I applied for a loan at a commercial bank but was denied because I didn't have any capital. Premier Landscape wouldn't be what it is today without the financial assistance I received from Fresno County EOC."

"I started my business with a pick and shovel."

"It is also imperative that individuals, small businesses, and organizations that believe in the potential of distressed communities and want to invest in them are provided the financial resources necessary to succeed," adds Chairman Vongsavanh Mouanoutoua. "Community economic development and revitalization begins with these visionaries."

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Though a newly formed organization, Fresno CDFI is building on the resources, experiences, and successful track record of EOC's Microenterprise Development Program. "Fresno CDFI is under the same administrative guidance that, since 1993, has helped disburse more than \$2 million in loans to Fresno County's small farmers and low-income entrepreneurs," explains Manager Blong Lee. "Becoming a CDFI allows us the opportunity to attract more funds and put them to work in the community."

In general, a CDFI's primary mission is to stimulate economic development in communities that are underserved by traditional financial entities. It provides access to capital and financial services and takes one of several forms including a community development bank, community development credit union, community development loan fund, or community development venture capital company. Fresno CDFI will become a

comprehensive financial service, financial education, and information access institution for low-and moderate-income residents and businesspersons.

For Manuel, a \$10,000 loan at a competitive interest rate means his company is able to bid on large scale projects, hire more employees, and fund up-front costs not covered by homebuilders.



Employee prepares soil for planting.



To learn more about Fresno CDFI, please contact Blong Lee at 559.263.1096.

Maximum Impact: Training Tomorrow's Leaders Today



CALA participants work on a group project (clockwise: Anne Tran, Eva Lopez, Carmen Lopez, Patrick Turner)

What do a Head Start mental health coordinator, an EOC Finance accountant, and a Transitional Living Center case manager have in common?

They are all recognized as emerging leaders within Fresno County EOC and are graduates of the Agency's Community Action Leadership Academy, or CALA.

"The concept of CALA started with a simple conversation," says Associate Executive Director Dawn Cagle. "We asked ourselves how we, as an employer, could help our employees grow as leaders within the Agency. Alongside Dr. Jackie Ryle, we were able to create an academy that focuses on areas we feel are essential to leadership development."

Sarah Worthen, a recent CALA graduate and case manager for Transitional Living Center, says,

In its seventh year at the Agency, CALA has graduated 139 employees.

"As a CALA graduate, I now have a toolbox of new strategies and techniques to practice every day, and as I review my notes, I can see that I have so many things to remember and apply." She adds, "In particular, I'll continue working on my mediation skills ... there are daily opportunities to help others resolve conflicts in a positive way."

In its seventh year at the Agency, CALA has graduated 139 employees. According to Cagle, 24% of those graduates have been promoted to a higher level position within the organization.



Head Start's Ed Rodriguez receives completion certificate (left to right: Dawn Cagle, Naomi Quiring-Mizumoto, Dr. Jackie Ryle, Ed Rodriguez)



Head Start staff discuss leadership roles during 2008 academy. (left to right: Lupe Zuñiga, Michelle Silva, Patricia Arambula Vega)

CALA curriculum includes seven courses that involve interactive participation, teamwork, and self-directed study. Some topics covered include effective communication; diversity; leadership styles and models; group development; and team interaction.

