

COUNTY OF SANTA BARBARA



*Commission
for Women*

2015 Service Award Recipients

1st District

Adsum Education Foundation

Adsum Education Foundation was founded in 2010 to respond to the urgent unmet needs of undocumented students in Santa Barbara County. Every year, hundreds of undocumented students graduate from Santa Barbara County high schools. Brought to the U.S. as minors, they have withstood economic challenges to steadfastly pursue college and become productive members of our community. They represent some of the brightest and most accomplished students, working diligently to advance their education despite the obstacles they face. However, their academic excellence is simply not enough to make college a reality. Without access to traditional sources of financial aid, higher education is a nearly impossible dream. That's where Adsum comes in. Adsum provides educational scholarships for these students who because of their status do not have access to federal sources of financial aid. Over the past five years, Adsum has awarded over 135 scholarships, the majority to young women, totaling over \$360,000. All scholarship recipients completed at least four years in a Santa Barbara County junior high and high school, and all are graduates of our county high schools. They are all enrolled as full-time students in California Community Colleges, Cal State Universities, or University of California campuses. Scholarships are paid directly to the educational institution and must be used for tuition, fees, or books. The name Adsum, "I am here" in Latin, is meant to tell AB 540 students that they are not invisible – that we see them and recognize their struggle – and that they are not alone, for Adsum, and the community that supports them, are here too.

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2nd District

PFLAG Santa Barbara

Founded nationally in 1972 with the simple act of a mother publicly supporting her gay son, Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG) is the nation's largest family and ally organization with over 250,000 members. Uniting people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) with families, friends and allies, PFLAG envisions a world where diversity is celebrated and all people are respected. PFLAG Santa Barbara is committed to advancing equality and full societal affirmation of LGBTQ people through its threefold mission of support, education and advocacy. Re-launched a year ago by a small group of local parents and activists, PFLAG Santa Barbara has become a touchstone for support. Monthly meetings now include up to 60 people. PFLAG Santa Barbara members have reached out to other community organizations. They participate in Soup & Sharing, a program that itself is a resource and joy to many. PFLAG works with various religious organizations and they collaborate with high school principals eager to share information about PFLAG's presence and gatherings with teachers, students and parents. PFLAG meets on the second Monday of every month, 7:00 p.m. at the Orfalea Downtown Center; Newcomers are always welcome.

3rd District

Active Minds, University of California, Santa Barbara

Founded in February of 2008, Active Minds at UCSB is dedicated to reducing the stigma associated with mental health issues, educating the students of UCSB about mental health, and acting as a liaison between the students and the mental health community. Active Minds was intended to create awareness on the campus

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through unique and creative events, discussion, tabling, and movie nights. Active Minds at UCSB is known as one of the strongest chapters in the nation, demonstrated by their 5-star chapter rating six straight years since its founding.

4th District

Recovery Way Home, Good Samaritan Services, Inc.

Recovery Way Home is a residential program that is a part of the Good Samaritan Services (GSS) and is a home for women with young children, where they can have a safe and structured environment to create a fresh start for them and their children. In October 2008, GSS started providing services in the Lompoc region, including Recovery Way Home, a perinatal residential program serving 16 women and their children. When outpatient treatment is not enough, Recovery Way Home provides residential care with a warm “home” environment. In addition to receiving day treatment at Turning Point (another GSS program) women staying at Recovery Way Home get extra support from experienced staff and peers. Recovery Way Home has requirements of 6 months minimal stay, with a maximum of 18 months. The residential program can house 16 women with up to 2 children each under the age of 5. Most are low income and are required to pay a fee based on a sliding scale.

Recovery way Home provides the following:

- Parenting Techniques
- Home Management
- Nutrition & Health Education
- Economic Independence
- Transportation
- Child Care Referrals
- Clean & Sober Living Environment
- 24/7 Staffing

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The women at Recovery Way Home maintain a daily schedule that includes supervised time with their babies and young children, meditation, and group counseling services. The clients also learn how to buy their own groceries, plan for healthy meals, cook, and keep a clean and safe place for their children while learning how to manage a future that would be free of drugs and alcohol. You will find that as these women “graduate” out of the program, they in turn have the opportunity to give back to women who are coming into Recovery Way Home behind them. Because they have walked through the beast of recovery they are able to understand and help other women just like themselves.

5th District

Santa Maria Women’s Network

The Santa Maria Women’s Network (SMWN) is comprised of 88 men and women who work in the business and private sectors. Members represent diverse career fields, professions, aspirations and backgrounds. Yet, their shared belief in professional and personal development and the overall advancement of women unifies the organization. Monthly gatherings provide an effective platform for:

- Programs and speakers that contribute valuable insight into the inevitable highs and lows of the business cycle;
- Peer-to-peer sharing of relevant and pertinent ideas; and
- Networking to forge strategic business partners and connections.

Over the years, this savvy organization has added clear value to its members and the entire Santa Maria Valley community by introducing the Women’s Work Micro-Business Trade Show; establishing the Women of Excellence Dinner; instituting a members only scholarship fund to assist each other in personal and professional

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development; encouraging active community involvement by awarding a grant to non-profits that promote the spirit and joy of the holiday season; and, investing in an important economic driver of our community by creating the Christine Gerber Educational Excellence scholarship award for a local teacher. These accomplishments should be considered with the knowledge that the SMWN is an all-volunteer organization.

The members of the SMWN provide significance and credibility to a well-known quote: “The way in which we think of ourselves has everything to do with how our world sees us and how we see ourselves successfully acknowledged by the world.”