

COUNTY OF SANTA BARBARA



*Commission
for Women*

2014 Service Award Recipients

1st District

Mental Wellness Center

Since 1947, the Mental Wellness Center has been working to meet the needs of adults and families who are affected by mental illness. In 1959, the Fellowship Club was founded, which has evolved into a Recovery Learning Center model serving hundreds with a focus on peer-supported workshops, and building social skills. A “Care Closet” allow clients to shop for clothes that assist their transition into employment. Community Wellness Programs offer valuable classes, activities and support groups, all free of charge. The Garden Street Apartments provide safe and affordable housing onsite for qualified clients and the Employment Services Programs offer job opportunities and job training for mental health clients. Additionally, Mental Wellness Center has designed and implemented education programs, including a Mental Health First Aid public education course and Mental Health Matters, which has been taught to over 600 6th graders by trained volunteers. The National Alliance of Mental Illness (NAMI) is another valuable program that assists families in accessing resources, advocacy and support services, and meets monthly at the Center.

Dedicated staffs have the heart and critical skills to improve the quality of life for families living with mental illness. By providing residential and support services, as well as education and advocacy in the community at large, the Mental Wellness Center has made a positive difference in the lives of thousands of individuals in our community.

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2nd District

The CARE Program at Santa Barbara City College

The CARE Program (Coordinated Agencies Resources for Education), at Santa Barbara City College (SBCC), serves low-income single parent students with funds for childcare, book grants, school supplies, and counseling of both an academic and personal nature. At SBCC, this program currently serves 250 students of which the majority of them are women who want to improve their lives and those of their children by starting or returning to college. The financial assistance, counseling and childcare programs are awarded as a means of strengthening the retention, persistence, graduation, and transfer rates of these individuals. These funds and programs help students to be confident that during their classroom hours their children are in a safe and supportive environment and gives them needed support that contributes to their educational success.

3rd District

Doctors Without Walls, Santa Barbara Street Medicine

Doctors Without Walls provides free, volunteer, medical care for the most vulnerable of Santa Barbara County, when and where they are in need, including in times of disaster. They also provide education and training for their volunteers and others, in order to promote the excellent practice of humanitarian medicine in our hometown and elsewhere.

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4th District

MarketableYou.org

MarketableYou.Org was started on April 31, 2011, offering the Lompoc community a computer-based, self-paced, learning program. MarketableYou was established as a privately funded non-profit organization sustained by individual and in-kind donations from local businesses and individuals. MarketableYou's goal is, "to help the job seeker through education, to learn skills relevant to the current job market, not only benefiting the client, but the community at large."

Currently, MarketableYou has two full-time and three part-time volunteer teachers and staff members to work with the 47 students enrolled in the program. 72% of the students are women. These students volunteer one hour of time for every ten hours of study. The lab consists of seven rooms, five each with six to eight computers for the students to use, and a photo studio that doubles as a classroom for group activities. The students learn via the internet, the most current versions of many major software applications and skills that help them learn how to get and keep a job. The knowledgeable staff on hand provides them with guidance and answers all questions.

Originally, this program was designed for the unemployed, the underemployed, and the inquisitive, but the virtual lab at MarketableYou has spread its wings to include those just needing help with English, Spanish, literacy, and getting ready to take the GED test or their Citizenship Interview. This year they will be including United Way's Power Reading Program into their curriculum.

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5th District

THRIVE, Santa Maria

THRIVE, Santa Maria, began in 2010 as a collaboration of residents, schools, providers, funders, officials, experts, and volunteers working together with a shared commitment to an improved cradle to career pathway to success for our youth, including their families. THRIVE, Santa Maria, has 4 cornerstones:

1. Build Quality Early Education Opportunities
2. Build Positive Family Relationships
3. Build Healthy Options
4. Build a Stronger Community

Through these cornerstones, low-income women in the 5th District of Santa Barbara County can access:

- CHILDCARE through the 48 pre-school spaces
- PARENTING WORKSHOPS through Mixteco Mommy & Me and home visits for new mothers
- RECREATION through Zumba Classes
- FOOD AND NUTRITION through the Healthy Food Pantry
- MEDICAL AND DENTAL SERVICES through the Brush, Brush, Brush program and mobile medical van

On average, 200 unique households participate in one or more of these programs each month. THRIVE, Santa Maria, is able to achieve their vision and implementation of comprehensive programming in collaboration with

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47 local organizations and 1,000 volunteers. Through the dedication of THRIVE, Santa Maria, women in Santa Maria have an opportunity to achieve.