



# An Opportunity Conference for SLO County



# In the Beginning...

# Seed Planted Three Years Ago

- ❖ Hearing Donna speak in San Diego
- ❖ Bringing cultural diversity training to SLO DSS
  - ❖ Recognizing poverty as a culture
- ❖ Reactions from staff

“I remember now why I chose this work.”

# Spreading the Message

- ❖ Poverty 101 training 02/10
  - ❖ Cross-section of community came
  - ❖ Strong representation from County Office of Education
  - ❖ Follow-on training at COE
- ❖ Reactions from participants

“Touched my heart with hope for clients I serve.”

“Gained new insight and understanding.

“Will talk to my kids to raise awareness.”





# Making it Happen



# The Message Resonates

- ❖ If you've lived it or not
- ❖ 'Helping profession' or business background
- ❖ Escaping poverty requires opportunity
  - ❖ Alleviating symptoms does not create change



# Structuring the Project

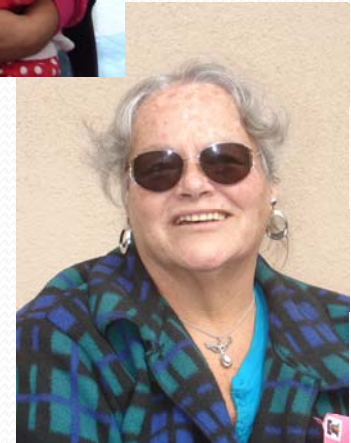
- ❖ Steering Committee and subcommittees
  - ❖ Logistics, fundraising/finance, media/marketing, volunteers, navigator/participant, seniors/disabled, children's program
- ❖ Work process
- ❖ Support from Poverty Bridge

# Involving the Community

- ❖ Cuesta College
  - ❖ Synergy of mission
  - ❖ Venue, honorary chair
- ❖ Rotary clubs
  - ❖ Poverty is a priority for Rotary
- ❖ Chambers of commerce
- ❖ Faith-based organizations

# Getting the Word Out

- ❖ Toolkit
  - ❖ Name and logo
  - ❖ Statistics, stories, photos
- ❖ Media relations
- ❖ Presentations
- ❖ Information sessions
- ❖ Flyers, brochure, letters
- ❖ Websites



# Lessons We're Learning

- ❖ Timing
  - ❖ It does take a year
  - ❖ Committees must meet, members must work
- ❖ Group communication is vital
- ❖ Pros and cons of all-volunteer organization
- ❖ \$40,000 is a good overall cost estimate
  - ❖ Offset with donations – financial and in-kind
  - ❖ Be creative

# Conference Benefits

- ❖ Obvious benefits for participants
- ❖ Re-energize professionals
- ❖ Raise awareness of poverty challenges
- ❖ Can be a local initiative or a supporting activity
- ❖ You can make it your own



# Making it Our Own



# Youth Conference

- ❖ What an Opportunity!!
  - ❖ Child events → Youth Opportunity Conference
- ❖ Ages 0 – 18
- ❖ Igniting their “spark”



# “SPARKS”

## Igniting Hidden Strengths in our Youth

- ❖ Based on Search Institute’s “40 Developmental Assets” approach
- ❖ Promotes positive behaviors
- ❖ Protects youth from high-risk behaviors

[www.search-institute.org](http://www.search-institute.org)  
[www.IgniteSparks.org](http://www.IgniteSparks.org)

# It Takes A Village

- ❖ Youth Conference planning subcommittee:
  - ❖ DSS, COE, Community Action Partnership, Friday Night Live, Independent Living, Cuesta College, Early Learning for All (ELFA), Asset Development Network of SLO County



# Infants/Toddlers and Pre K

- ❖ Cuesta Children's Center
  - ❖ Early Head Start Program



# Setting the Stage: Grades K-12

- ❖ Kick off activity
  - ❖ Revolution Speak with Jeremy Bates, HOPE Dealer
  - ❖ A blend of live music and personal stories filled with humor and humility, where it is cool to HOPE more, LOVE more, LEARN more, and DO more

*Ignite the spark!*

# Elementary Ages K-3, 4-6

## *Rancho El Chorro Outdoor School*



# Middle School

Option 1:  
Super Charged Science-Robotics



Option 2:  
Drumming Circle



Dean Giles

# Middle School

## Option 3: Adventure Course



*Partner: Grizzly Youth Academy, California National Guard*

# High School

- ❖ Morning session:
  - ❖ Adventure Course
    - ❖ Grizzly Youth Academy, California National Guard
  - ❖ Alternative: Super Charged Science Robotics
- ❖ Afternoon session:
  - ❖ Introduction to Cuesta College
    - ❖ Student tours, job placement reps
    - ❖ Meet with Financial Aid, Admissions

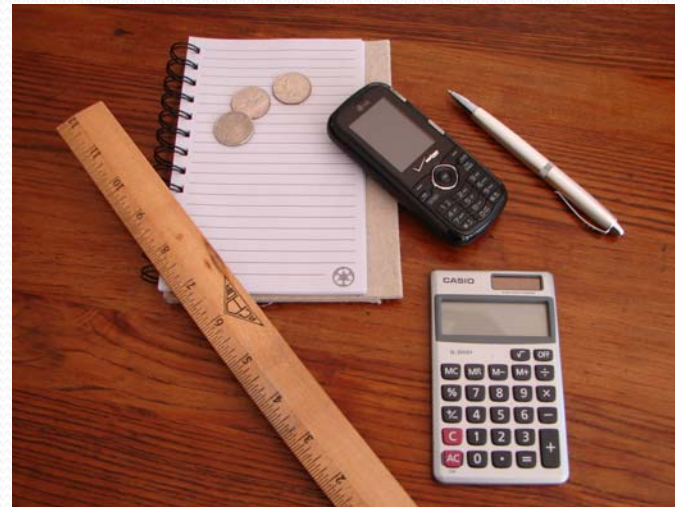
# “Spark” Flags

- ❖ Art activity, all ages
- ❖ Closing ceremony with families



# The Devil is in the Details!

- ❖ Challenges:
  - ❖ Safety
  - ❖ Transportation
  - ❖ Staffing
  - ❖ Funding





Find Out More

# References and Contacts

- ❖ [www.slopoverty.wordpress.com](http://www.slopoverty.wordpress.com)
- ❖ [www.slocounty.ca.gov/Poverty.htm](http://www.slocounty.ca.gov/Poverty.htm)
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