



# CULTURAL COMPETENCY UPDATE

...a newsletter to address cultural issues that enable us to effectively work in cross cultural situations.

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## Building the Community

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**BHRS Cultural Competence Oversight Committee meets on the 2nd Monday of each month from 9:00 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. in the Redwood Room, 800 Scenic Drive**

Building community across age, ethnic, economic and social lines has been an ongoing goal of the Bridge Community Center. Over the past two years, with help from BHRS, the youth at the Bridge have formed the Bridge Youth Builders, led by Jean Kea, the Bridge Youth Coordinator. Known as BYB, members include teens 14-19 from ethnic groups including Cambodian, Hmong, Lao and Hispanic. All teens in that age group are welcome to join. With goals to participate in community service activities and learn lessons in leadership, the members periodically join with the Tuolumne River Trust, the Hmong Student Association at CSU Stanislaus, and Love Modesto in community service activities. They also have occasional field trips to get them out of Modesto and gain broader perspectives. Trips have included Pine Crest, the State Capitol, Pumpkin Patch in Lathrop, and Knights Ferry.

The members mentor the younger children who come to the Bridge. For those under 5 years of age, they play games with them and help them discover fascinating glimpses of nature in the Bridge gardens such as bugs, humming birds, flowers, etc. When a very shy little Lao-American Indian boy started coming to the Bridge with his grandparents, he would not speak at all. The BYB members started trying to help him feel comfortable, have fun, and interact with others. Over time, to everyone's excitement and delight, he started saying a few words, and finding things to show and tell to BYB members and the Bridge staff. The Bridge Youth Builders help school children, and each other, with homework. They help with setup for the annual back-to-school event, Christmas, and Easter activities. They also have designed and



Painted beautiful murals on the old barn at the Bridge, and have ongoing projects to clean up the Bridge grounds, develop gardens and tend them, and just generally help in any way they can.

The BYB members have several special, longer-term projects including learning

basic words in Cambodian, Hmong, Lao, Spanish and Indonesian languages. They are also raising money to donate to Heifer International's projects which help families in Cambodia and Laos. They also have guests who speak to them about various careers, college opportunities, and financial principles for good money management.

At least one or two afternoons a week, the members have outdoor sports activities, including volley ball, ping pong, and basketball. On the afternoons for basketball, neighborhood youths who are not members of the BYB come to join them for games and just generally to have fun and get to know each other. Meanwhile, indoors the BYB girls may be practicing Hmong or Lao dancing. They often perform at community celebrations such as cultural fairs, conferences, and other venues. The BYB members and the Bridge staff are planning a Bridge Cultural Fair on June 6, 2014 from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m. All are welcome to attend.



## Highlights of April Cultural Equity and Social Justice Committee (CESJC) Meeting

**Champion Award**—Ruben reported the workgroup met to review the Champion Award Criteria and they made following recommendations:

- Change award name to the committee's name: CESJC Champion Award
- Give dual awards: A Cultural Competency and Equity and Social Justice Award
- Clearly define what CESJC means
- Partner with partners with similar interest to raise status of the award

**CLAS Asset Mapping Review & Planning**—Ruben requested the committee to start documenting the current CLAS standards strategies and make suggestions on ways to improve them. Christi Golden suggested the committee contact other county mental health agencies to obtain ideas on how they incorporate the CLAS standards. Ruben informed the committee the planning process for CLAS standards will take place at the next meeting.

**Ethnic Services Manager/Statewide CESJC Report**—Jorge Fernandez reported the California Mental Health Directors will form an advisory committee that will include seven members from the California Department of Mental Health. Jorge stated the new Cultural Competency Plan will be a foundation from the 2010 plan.

**LGBTQA Behavioral Health Collaborative**—Monica Silva gave a presentation on the LGBTQA Community Capacity Building strategies:

- Provide training and education for existing program services focused on serving the LGBTQA community
- Increase partnerships focused on improving behavioral health for the LGBTQA community
- Develop an updated and accurate resource list for behavioral health and social supports for the LGBTQA community
- Increase peer support for youth in the LGBTQA community

If you have questions or suggestions regarding Cultural Competency, please forward them by e-mail to:

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