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News Release

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County Enters 20th Year of Mentoring Program

The County Mentoring program was initially approved as a pilot on September 29, 1998 becoming a program on January 1, 1999. Now celebrating the completion of year nineteen, the program continues to attract County employees and partner agencies/organizations who wish to give back and become involved in the lives of young people in Stanislaus County. In 1999, the first full year of implementation, 30 Stanislaus County employees started mentoring.

Each year since, returning and new employees have continued to sustain the program. At the end of calendar year 2017, the program continues to thrive with 188 total mentors and providing 2,567.3 hours of youth mentoring. 73 Stanislaus County employees contributed 813 mentor hours last year. This sustained commitment by county employees and our community partners is a significant testimonial to the power of this long-standing program. Stanislaus mentors represent a very diverse organizational base with 19 county departments participating during 2017.

The program continues to grow in large part due to the amazing participation from our partner organizations: Stanislaus County Office of Education (SCOE), the Cities of Hughson and Modesto, City Ministries, Wells Fargo, Lions 500 and Modesto Rotary clubs. The program has been recognized regionally and nationally providing workshops and presentations to interested organizations, including the National Points of Light Conference (1999 and 2003), other Counties, and various leadership groups. In September 2008 the program was honored at the Annual National Mentor Summit in Anaheim as a National best practice and in 2010 the Modesto Chamber of Commerce recognized the

program as non-profit best practice of the year. In 2016, the program was recognized by the California State Association of Counties as the Challenge Award winner and received the Award of Excellence by the National Association of Counties.

Beginning in the 2015-16 school year, we initiated the use of an aggregated progress survey for our protégés. The survey tracks on five important soft skill areas: listening, focus (avoiding distraction), following directions, working independently, and the ability to work with others. The 2016-2017 summary reflects significant improvements across all five areas at all of our school locations. Originally called the Academic Intervention Mentors (AIM) program, the model boasts a team-based mentoring approach.

Employee teams, of up to three individuals, adopt a young person for the school year. The team then rotates the meeting times and acts as support and back up to one another should scheduling conflicts arise unexpectedly. This has proven to be invaluable for mentor recruiting purposes. In fact, over the past five years it is not unusual to have multiple Department Heads and senior management, County Supervisors and even the County Chief Executive Officer actively participating in the program. This kind of bottom up/top down investment is unique and speaks volumes to the program support at every level of our organization. The Stanislaus Mentor process is extremely easy for employees and partner affiliates to follow and the program continues to increase its visibility through active outreach and community participation. Teachers and Reading Specialists identify elementary students in need of assistance. All interactions take place at one of six Modesto City School campus locations and one Hughson location. Each participant school site monitors the results for each student along with attendance and hours of each mentor.

The Employee Mentor program is now entering its twentieth year (2018). On January 25, the Employee Mentor Recognition Dinner recognizes those employees, volunteers, educators and protégés involved in the program. The Mentor Employee of the year is recognized and student protégé talent is showcased. This year the Stanislaus Office of Education is once again co-hosting the event at the Martin Petersen Event Center on the evening of Thursday, January 25. The community outreach and positive role model experiences that have become cornerstone to this approach speak volumes about the integrity and commitment of our employees and those public and private sector partners that have stepped forward to participate.

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