

Tulare County Office of Education

Jim Vidak, County Superintendent of Schools

November 17, 2006

For Immediate Release

Contact: Robert Herman
Public Information Officer
(559) 733-6606
cell: (559) 901-3445

Tulare County Office of Education Announces: Services for Education and Employment Program Awarded \$250,000 in Grants to Expand Employment Services to People with Disabilities.

Visalia – The Tulare County Office of Education is pleased to announce that its Services for Education and Employment (SEE) program recently received grants totaling \$250,000 from The California Wellness Foundation (TCWF) and the Community Technology Foundation of California (CTFC).

SEE's job placement program, called "A Ticket to Success," assists people on Social Security Disability who want to return to the workplace under a contract with the Social Security Administration's Ticket to Work program.

The California Wellness Foundation awarded a grant to SEE of \$150,000 over three years to expand support and preparation of low-wage workers with disabilities to obtain jobs that provide living wages and health benefits. The grant will also help increase referrals to benefit planning and other health services for those re-entering employment, and provide technical assistance and hands-on training to other Ticket to Work Employment Networks in California by strengthening

- more -

Tulare County Office of Education

Jim Vidak, County Superintendent of Schools

Page 2

their capacity to serve people with disabilities.

The Community Technology Foundation of California grant of \$100,000 will supplement the TCWF grant in providing technical support for the training of other California employment networks. A portion of the two-year grant will be used to design and implement an interactive community website designed for support and information sharing between agencies participating in the statewide training. Eventually, the website will be accessible to Ticket to Work agencies nationwide.

“We appreciate the support these California foundations have given our program – allowing us to better serve people with disabilities,” says Tulare County Superintendent of Schools Jim Vidak.

“We are also pleased that these grants allow us to help other Ticket to Work agencies in California learn from our successes.”

A Ticket to Success has offices in Visalia and Fresno and can serve eligible Social Security beneficiaries throughout the San Joaquin Valley. The program is overseen by Regional Coordinator Karen Davidson who will work to expand its services and train other agencies throughout the State. Ms. Davidson recently learned that SEE’s Ticket to Work agency is ranked first in California and sixth in the U.S. in performance outcomes (not including the State Department of Rehabilitation and agencies operating nationally).

- more -

Tulare County Office of Education

Jim Vidak, County Superintendent of Schools

Page 3

For more information about A Ticket to Success, call Karen Davidson at (800) 540-0307 or visit www.tcoe.org/tickettowork.

TCOE

Rel. 55/06