



Central Valley Higher Education Consortium

Final Report to California Partnership for the San Joaquin Valley

The College Place: A Community-Based College Access Center

Overview:

Project Summary

We seek to spur Central Valley residents to continue their education beyond high school and be better prepared for the world of work and civic responsibility through post-secondary education. The launch of The College Place, our Seed Grant initiative, is located at the Manchester Mall in Fresno, California. This initiative was a critical step in helping Valley residents gain access to college readiness and coaching services in the evenings and weekends in a non-traditional, yet familiar setting. This past two years, we targeted first-generation college goers and recruited and trained college mentors/coaches and offered assistance in application completion, college searches, college, and career exploration.

Highlights :

Quarter 1

A ribbon-cutting ceremony was held August 2007. Central Valley Higher Education Consortium Executive Board Members, the Deputy Mayor of Fresno and Partnership secretariat lead executive Ashley Swearingin participated in the ceremonies. K-12 Superintendents, college staff, business partners, and others joined in the official launch of the Center. Following the ceremony, the article "Shopping for College" was published in the Fresno Business Journal. As a result of this positive exposure, CitiBank donated \$5,000.

Quarters 1 and 2

We excelled to 250 contacts. By the third quarter, interns made 175 new contacts and developed a myspace social marketing website for the College Place. www.MySpace.com/thecollegeplace.

During the second quarter we secured \$50,000 in additional funding from the City of Fresno, raising the level of our services and the visibility in the community

Quarter 3

By quarter three, we formed a partnership with the Central Valley Library Consortium and opened seven satellite centers in public libraries. We also hosted a college fair in the Mall, which was attended by over 100 residents.

Executive Director Cheri Cruz was invited to an international conference to present The College Place model to college and guidance professional from various states countries including Boston, Washington

D.C., Chicago, Maryland, England, Spain, Canada, Ireland, African colonies, and others. The International College Access Network will be in Toronto, Canada.

Also in the third quarter our number of satellite centers increased:

Coalinga Library, Porterville Library, Huron Library, Oakhurst Library, Madera Ranchos Library, Reedley Library, Mendota Library, Springville Library, Merced library, Modesto Library, and Tulare Public Library.

Quarter 4

Hiring of a Supervisor – Albert Valencia, Ph.D, Faculty at CSU, Fresno Kremen School of Education began volunteering at the Center from the inception. Once the Seed grant money was secured, we were able to hire Albert part-time through an overload agreement with the University. Albert has trained 9 interns since the opening. All interns are college students who desire a career in education and counseling.

Final Quarter

This last quarter we were able to compile data. We learned:

1. Minority students comprised the overwhelming majority of visitors to the College Place. Half of our visitors were Hispanic/Latino (54%), followed by African-American (17%), Asian 8% respectively.
2. Primary languages spoken by visitors are English, Spanish, and Hmong. 60% of our visitors are born in the Central Valley, of which 60% born in Fresno, while the others born out of state. 7% are born in countries such as Mexico, Philippines, and Thailand.
3. Education levels of our visitors include less than 10% had yet graduated high school, a majority (60%) were in the 11th or 12th grades. Only 10% of visitors' mothers attended college, while 7% of fathers did. (other data available on request).

In the last quarter we also were able to obtain radio spots with two local radio stations to air PSA's to promote the College Place. They will begin airing Feb 9, 2009.

In addition, we completed a Guide Book to Valley Colleges and Universities which will be placed on our website collegenext.com and provided to County Offices of Education, local school districts, community programs and non-profit organizations, and to workforce investments boards. The Guidebook features all of the Institutions – 27 participated in the Central Valley Higher Education Consortium. In the publication, we promote the quantity and quality of higher education in the Central Valley.