

NEWS > LOCAL NEWS

Eureka's CAPE makes debut at statewide conference



Children from a camp sponsored by the Community Access Program for Eureka are served breakfast from the Rotary Club of Southwest Eureka. – Photo Provided by Brian Millett of Eureka Parks and Rec

By **NATALYA ESTRADA** |

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Eureka Parks and Rec employees are off to Los Angeles this week for the League of California Cities Conference on Friday. The Community Access Program for Eureka or CAPE will be highlighted in a presentation by the league.

Eureka Parks and Recreation Director Miles Slattery said initially the program was

CAPE now offers several programs including one that's catering to children in need of Halloween costumes this month, a multi-media program for teenagers, a ceramics class for youth and families at the Serenity Inn, as well as providing necessary free bus passes, helping with transitional housing, healthy and low-cost meals, kayak lessons and tours of Humboldt Bay and employment programs.

"We were definitely going into uncharted waters," Slattery said. "We didn't know if we could secure the funding and when we started developing more programs there was no real template to work with."

According to Slattery, CAPE worked with several different organizations — including Betty Chinn, CalFresh, Humboldt County's Department of Health and Human Services, the county Office of Education and the Marshall Foundation — to ensure CAPE's future success. Slattery also said Six Rivers Brewery, Pacific Gas and Electric Co. and the Rotary Club contributed program funding.

"What's unique about CAPE is that its completely community oriented and all of its programs are drawn by donations," Slattery said. "Making partnerships with so many organizations was key part of it's success."

Brian Millett, city recreation coordinator for Eureka Parks and Rec, said donations were one of the best parts of CAPE and came at no cost to the city's general fund.

"We have set up a donation, sponsorship and recognition program called the Eureka League of Heroes, where individuals, businesses, organizations and service groups can donate funding to go towards CAPE programming," Millett said, "There is no CAPE general fund or reserves. The money goes directly to cover the cost of staff, supplies or anything else needed so we can run these programs and help our community partners provide these services."

Millett also mentioned donors and sponsors for CAPE are recognized on their "Hall of Heroes," located at the Adorni Center.

Eureka Councilwoman Kim Bergel, who was en route to join Eureka Parks and Rec in Los Angeles, said she was proud of the department and believed CAPE would stand out because of how it positively engaged people in the community who otherwise wouldn't have the opportunity to join these programs.

"Being someone who's worked with the population they're targeting, and knowing what barriers these people face makes me feel great that they now have another resource to turn to," Bergel said.

Access to programs was a huge barrier according to Eureka Recreation Coordinator Ashley Taylor. Prior to CAPE, Taylor said children who wanted to go to summer camp had trouble with transportation, as well as financial problems with paying for services.

"We really wanted to connect with families and provide programming that would help them both in long term and short term goals," Taylor said. "We started providing housing services with help from the Marshall Foundation and Betty Chinn, which became long-term goals, whereas our program Pathways to Payday helped with childcare and resources for people trying to get jobs."

Since its inception, Pathways to Payday has helped 15 people gain employment, according to Slattery who said the program has been able to reach a lot of people in a little over a year. Slattery said he hoped other cities at the conference in L.A. would be inspired to create similar programs for their communities.

According to Millett, the model of CAPE was discovered through trial and error. He said the department is excited to present the program at the conference on Friday.

"We are doing this presentation in hopes to be able to provide the model for other cities that we didn't have when we were starting out, because we have the ability to really make a positive impact in the lives of others, not just locally in Eureka, but all throughout California, and in every city," Millett said.

Natalya Estrada can be reached at 707-441-0510.



Natalya Estrada

NEWS > LOCAL NEWS

Community program seeks 'co-pilots' to guide homeless to work, resources



Betty Kwan Chinn, a community partner of UPLIFT Eureka, lauded the program's efforts to help the community's homeless. (Times-Standard file)

By **SHOMIK MUKHERJEE** | smukherjee@times-standard.com |

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A local program, UPLIFT Eureka, is seeking volunteers to help homeless individuals in one-on-one settings to find work in the community.

UPLIFT doesn't seek to supplant other existing community programs, but rather connect locals to the resources already available to them. Individual volunteers, or "co-pilots," would meet with participants to encourage their progress.

Brian Millett, project manager for the city of Eureka, founded the program, which runs through city services.

"Participants will be guided step by step to access various resources as they work their way to success," an UPLIFT document reads. "These steps will include working on a personal budget, as well as setting up meetings to get basic paperwork taken care of such as Social Security and ID cards."

Funding for the program was raised through various city events, including an event earlier this month called "Hoodslam," a wrestling entertainment show.



The city raised money for UPLIFT through various events, including a "Hoodslam" event earlier this month, which saw a wrestling group throw down at Eureka. (Times-Standard file)

The program has partnered with various community resource groups, including the Eureka Rescue Mission; the county Department of Health and Human Services; and the Betty Kwan Chinn Day Center.

Betty Kwan Chinn, who has gained national attention for her efforts to shelter the

"We work to build (homeless people's) self-esteem and self-worth," Chinn said. "They know they can do something and they start to feel really comfortable looking for a job."

Changing the lives of homeless individuals isn't an overnight project, Chinn said. The UPLIFT program isn't mandatory for anyone. Homeless individuals can join or opt out of their own free will.

"They're a very good program," she said. "With the co-pilots, some are learning, some have experience."

Most are taking part in a good-faith effort to better the lives of others, she said.

UPLIFT was born out of the city's yearly "pathway to payday" program, in which participants run through workshops practicing job-applying and interviewing skills.

"I'm always amazed at this workshop, because the participants come from a wide range and background, and a lot of them before this workshop had just stopped looking for work or didn't know where or how to look or were maybe insecure that their background or living situation would be an instant deal breaker," Millett wrote in a submission to the Times-Standard last March.

"It's all about just giving them that platform, and they do the work to better themselves."

Shomik Mukherjee can be reached at 707-441-0504.

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Shomik Mukherjee

Shomik Mukherjee can be reached at 707-441-0504.