Youth Ambassadors for Peace Help Participants, Community

A program for young adults through the Workforce Development Board is doing good for more than just those enrolled.

The Workforce Development Board’s Youth Ambassadors for Peace Program participated in a community service clothing drive for the homeless in Salinas.
Ambassador participants and Workforce Development Board staff collected, wrapped and delivered fleece blankets, gloves, socks and hats to District 1 Supervisor Luis Alejo’s office last month. These items were distributed to homeless individuals to combat our chilly winter weather.

The Youth Ambassadors for Peace program is designed to redirect and re-engage at-risk youth in Monterey County who have been involved in the juvenile justice system. Those participating are between the ages of 16 and 24 and they are encouraged to obtain their high school diploma or General Equivalency Degree (GED).

“The Youth Ambassadors for Peace program assists participants with career exploration and to gain the necessary life skills to be successful as young adults,” said Program Supervisor, Korey Woo. “This is accomplished through various hands-on workshops designed to prepare them for work, school and life.”

Case managers also help participants to apply for college or vocational training.

Fair Housing Conditions to be Studied

Did you know that the work of the Economic Development Department includes housing issues such as low income projects and grants? As part of that work, it is exploring local fair housing conditions.

You may be hearing more about this as the Department launches outreach efforts and joins with local agencies for the Monterey Regional Assessment of Fair Housing Project.

The project will provide important information about housing in our community. It is also a requirement for the County to complete the work in order to continue receiving Community Development Block Grant funding from the federal government.
A significant part of the effort is community involvement, so the assessment involves a collaboration of jurisdictions to evaluate historical and existing fair housing conditions. The Monterey Urban County (representing the unincorporated areas and the cities of Gonzales, Greenfield, and Sand City), the cities of Salinas, Monterey and Seaside, as well as the Housing Authority of Monterey County are all participating. The net result will be the creation of fair housing goals and actions to be incorporated into the five-year Consolidated Plan(s) and Public Housing Agency Plan.

Collecting information requires outreach and community engagement to a diverse audience. There will be a wide variety of activities to do this, including:

- Fair Housing Survey
- 10 Key Informant Interviews
- Two Stakeholder Consultation Focus Groups
- Four Community Workshops
- Flyers, eblasts, social media coverage, web posts

The group is already hard at work. The survey will be launched soon and stakeholders are being identified. When you see the survey or workshops in your areas, this is your opportunity to get involved.

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**Flu Facts: Stay Well and Don’t Share the Bug**

With so many of us in the county workforce working in close quarters, it’s easy to share an unwanted gift: a cold, or even worse, the flu.

Disease surveillance data indicates that influenza activity is increasing in Monterey County.
What can you do to keep yourself and your loved ones healthy and not spread a ‘gift’ that keeps on giving misery? The first thing you can do, if you haven’t already, is get a flu shot.

Dr. Edward Moreno, Monterey County Health Officer, recommends that everyone six months of age and older be vaccinated against influenza, and it’s not too late to get yours.

“Though early reports indicate the vaccine may be less effective in preventing influenza this season as we hoped, reports indicate that the vaccine is still very effective at preventing hospitalizations and deaths,” says Moreno.

Flu shots are available at pharmacies or your doctor’s office and are covered by insurance. Other locations offering influenza vaccination can be found at http://flushot.healthmap.org/

Think you have the flu? Symptoms include fever, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, muscle or body aches, headaches and fatigue. People at higher risk of severe disease who show flu symptoms should contact their medical provider. Antibiotics are not effective against the flu.

For more information about influenza, visit the Monterey County Health Department’s website at www.mtyhd.org/flu or the CDC’s website www.cdc.gov/flu/