

Good News from S. H. Cowell Foundation -- We Have Been Adopted!

Thanks to the wonderful spirit, dedication and energy of our community, the S.H. Cowell Foundation notified hosts Capay Valley Vision, RISE, and the Esparto Unified School District that they look forward to a long partnership in our community!

As reported in the March edition of the *Valley Voice*, community members, local groups and public and private agencies packed the Esparto Scout Cabin in February to share ideas for community services and projects with the San Francisco-based private foundation. The Cowell Foundation focuses on four areas of improvement: Family Resource Centers, Affordable Housing, K-12 Education and Youth Development. In deciding where to make grants, they look for towns or communities where residents, service providers, schools and civic leaders are actively working together to improve the quality of life for children and families.

The daylong site visit began up the Valley at local farms and continuing to education and community sites in Madison and Esparto. After lunch, the community shared with the Foundation its concerns and hopes for the future around family services, housing, education and developing youth. By the end of the day, all were convinced of the strength of our community will and ability to work together. Supervisor Duane Chamberlain and Deputy Supervisor Patricia Valenzuela attended and supported the entire event along with School Board members Linda Herbst, Helen Voss, Julio Cota, and Rick Wilson. Special guests included other Cowell recipients, Sara Rock, Executive Director of Yolo Family Resource Center and Phyllis Deats, Executive Director of the Knight's Landing Collaborative; Dr. Bette Hinton, the Yolo County Public Health Officer; David Shoemaker, the County-Tribal Intergovernmental Coordinator; Julie Gallelo, Executive Director of First Five-Yolo; and Karen Charney, Director of the Rumsey Community Fund.

Sue Heitman, Capay Valley Vision President, moderated the event. Special thanks for the day go to CVV Board secretary, Jan Lowrey, discussing community vision; Ron Voss, chair of the Housing Task Force, leading discussion on housing issues; Cathie Wicks, Executive Director of RISE leading discussion on family resource centers/youth development and Esparto Superintendent Tom Michaelson leading community discussion on education and youth development issues. Other community leaders responsible for tours or parts of the morning discussion included Trudi Martin, Greta Taber, Linda Dufault, Philip Anguay, Paul Muller, David Scheuring, Hanan Bowman, Ray Burton and Helen Voss. Behind the scenes and responsible for all of the logistics were Thomas Nelson and Chelsea Becker with Capay Valley Vision. Final thanks to all community members, teachers, families and organizations who spoke up on behalf of the Capay Valley-Esparto-Madison community at the event.

The work is just beginning with a crucial next step: an April 16 strategic planning workshop in Esparto. At that time, key stakeholders will look at the projects that have been envisioned and start to outline steps for implementation. This will be an opportunity to expand and begin preparing formal application to Cowell and prepare Community

Enhancement proposals for the upcoming mitigation fund deadline. For more information please contact Thomas Nelson at 796-4160 or thomas@capayvalleyvision.org.

Many thanks to all who helped make a winning presentation to the S.H. Cowell for them to work with us for many years to come.