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Contact: **Rebekkah Tucker, Marketing and Public Relations**
 Transitions-Mental Health Association
 805.550.6510, btucker@t-mha.org

GROWING GROUNDS RECEIVES STRATEGIC GRANT FROM REDF

Grant will support client employment and training through expanding social enterprise visibility and marketing.

SAN LUIS OBISPO, CA – Transitions-Mental Health Association (TMHA) has received a \$12,500 grant from the Roberts Enterprise Development Fund (REDF) Strategic Grants program. This grant will be used to purchase two new label machines, as well as labels and label-making software for TMHA’s three nonprofit Growing Grounds Enterprises.

All three social enterprises are in the business of selling plants—both decorative and garden-ready seedlings. All of these products require proper labeling, not only for botanical accuracy but as a way of furthering the TMHA logo and brand (which can appear on the back of the label).

The current label maker is 12 years old and, as the volume of sales steadily increases, the demand on the machine has rendered it unreliable. The new machines will allow Growing Grounds Enterprises to expand its marketing and awareness efforts, directly supporting the clients it serves.

“We are so excited to receive the new label makers. They enable our social enterprises to connect the plants they grow to their business. Staff can take extra pride for the hand crafting that goes in to each product,” says Frank Ricceri, Division Director of TMHA’s Vocational Programs.

“We are thrilled to add written details about some of the heirloom vegetable seedlings. Custom, local information will add value to our customers gardening experience.”

Growing Grounds began in 1984 with the Growing Grounds Farm & Nursery in San Luis Obispo and since has expanded into a farm in Santa Maria and plant and gift shop in downtown San Luis Obispo. The three Growing Grounds Enterprises combine horticultural therapy and vocational training to provide individuals with mental illness employment and a supportive environment where personal growth can be realized.

This past year Ricceri was selected for a *Social Enterprise 4 Jobs* fellowship funded by REDF. This 7-month training engages a cohort of 17 social enterprise leaders from across the nation and focuses on strengthening and sustaining businesses like Growing Grounds Enterprises. The training and support of transitional employees returning to the workforce is central to all program design.

ABOUT REDF

REDF is venture philanthropy that creates jobs and transforms lives in America. They lead a national movement of employment-focused social enterprises offering tools, training and support enabling businesses to invest the money they make into helping their employees get a lasting shot at a better life. REDF invests in social enterprises

created explicitly to hire people who want to work and contribute but often do not get the chance because of disadvantages in their lives.

ABOUT TMHA

TMHA is a nonprofit organization dedicated to eliminating stigma and promoting recovery and wellness for people with mental illness through work, housing, community and family support services. TMHA operates 30 programs at over 35 locations that reach over 2,000 people and 1,500 families in San Luis Obispo and Santa Barbara counties. The emphasis of TMHA's many services is to teach vital independent living skills, and build a framework for community re-entry through personal empowerment and hands on experience. For over 35 years, TMHA has been dedicated to providing housing, employment, case management and life-skills support to teens and adults with mental illness; and support, resources and education for their loved ones.

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One of the greenhouses at the Growing Grounds Farm and Nursery. Yellow label tags are used to identify plants.



Ariela Gottschalk, Program Manager, watering at Growing Grounds Farm in Santa Maria.