



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 17, 2017

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TRANSITIONS-MENTAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION RECEIVES GRANT FROM CENTRAL COAST FUNDS FOR CHILDREN
Grant will help fund specialized sessions for youth with mental illnesses in local Equine Therapy Program.

SAN LUIS OBISPO, CA – Transitions-Mental Health Association (TMHA) has received \$2,500 from Central Coast Funds for Children (CCFC). For the third year in a row, teens from TMHA's San Luis Obispo County Youth Treatment Program (YTP) will have the opportunity to enter an Equine Facilitated Psychotherapy (EFP) program, operated by Gina Sears, licensed Marriage and Family Therapist.

EFP is an experiential treatment approach involving several aspects of horsemanship. The youth's exposure to equine therapy has proved to be enormously successful and contributed greatly to the youth's rehabilitation. The results of the collaboration between YTP and EFP were overwhelmingly positive. YTP Program Therapist Anna Yeackle observed "with this collateral therapy, the kids who participated met their treatment goals much sooner." This outcome prompted TMHA to pursue renewed grant funding from CCFC so YTP clients could continue their participation.

"The Equine Therapy Program at YTP has been such a tremendous opportunity for each child who has been able to participate, said Alley Jensen, Program Manager. "The kids light up every week they are able to go, share about their horse and teach us what they are learning. I have seen this program support not only the therapeutic process for these kids but also self-esteem, balance and general health and fitness. We are so grateful to CCFC for recognizing the value of this program, and supporting it for another year."

Transitions-Mental Health Association has operated YTP for over 30 years. Approximately 80% of the young men and women (12-18 ½ years-old) in the program have experienced physical, sexual or emotional abuse and over 60% are from low-income families. These are pre-teens and teenagers who are unable to cope in their home setting and need recovery and stabilization in a different living structure altogether. The goal of the YTP is for residents to make a lasting, long-term improvement in their lives by either: 1) returning to live with their families, 2) living in a less restrictive placement such as a foster home, or 3) emancipating from foster care and live independently. This goal reflects the overall mission of Transitions-Mental Health Association: to advocate for recovery, growth, and independence of individuals and their families in our community.

CCFC was founded in 1994 to benefit children with special needs in San Luis Obispo County. It has since awarded over \$1 million dollars to local nonprofit organizations to benefit children's programs within the County. To learn more about CCFC, call 805-544-5911, or log onto www.centralcoastfundsforchildren.org.

ABOUT TMHA

Transitions-Mental Health Association 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. 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 30 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. For more information, visit www.T-MHA.org.

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Youth participating in The Equine Therapy Program.