



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**GROWING GROUNDS FARM RECEIVES GRANT FUNDING FROM
HAROLD J. MIOSSI CHARITABLE TRUST FOR IMPROVED WATER CONSERVATION PRACTICES**

San Luis Obispo, CA – Transitions-Mental Health Association (TMHA) has received a grant in the amount of \$12,200 from the Harold J. Miozzi Charitable Trust to implement a strategy of new conservation practices to save water, power, and money at their Growing Grounds Farm in San Luis Obispo.

For over 30 years, TMHA has operated the **Growing Grounds Farm** of San Luis Obispo, one of California's most compassionate, proactive forms of treatment for adults suffering from mental illness. A combination of horticultural therapy and vocational training, the farm provides a disenfranchised population with true employment opportunities while maintaining a supportive environment. Our employees are diagnosed with persistent illnesses such as schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, anxiety disorder or major depression. The Growing Grounds Farm champions agricultural practices that are ecologically sensitive and environmentally proactive and strives to be a fixture in the community through local nurseries, landscapers, farmers markets, business deliveries, and our retail location in downtown San Luis Obispo.

Typically, the Farm draws from a local aquifer on site. "To conserve the Farm's consumption of water and electricity we have designed a comprehensive retrofit of all our irrigation," explained Craig Wilson, Program Manager of Growing Grounds Farm in San Luis Obispo. "The technology we have identified is a sprinkler head that gives more uniform coverage and improves plant quality and health while using 30% less water than sprinklers currently in use." If and when the drought subsides, these new sprinkler heads will still provide savings to the farm—drawing less water from the well and using less electricity—while conserving water for the future.

Growing Grounds Farm client employees will be utilized in the retrofit and installation process, which will provide indispensable new skills, on the job training, and paid employment for our employees. "Given the primary agenda of the Growing Grounds Farm, it is important to note that the grant from the Miozzi Trust will not only address conservation issues, but will create approximately 177 extra work shifts providing professionally supervised training in skilled labor to adults with mental illness," said Wilson.

Growing Grounds Farm strives to improve the quality of life for our clients by helping them achieve personal goals that represent significant steps in their recovery. Clients that participate in our program learn valuable, transferable work skills and develop increased self-esteem and independence.

"The \$12,200 grant will specifically be used to focus on the client and professional labor portion of this drought driven effort to save precious water resources," explained Wilson.

This is the third grant that the Harold J. Miozzi Charitable Trust has made to the Growing Grounds Farm of San Luis Obispo. The Trust was instrumental in helping the Farm launch its Seed Bank program, and they have continued their avid support by focusing this year on the pressing issue of water conservation.

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. 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 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.

ABOUT MIOSSI CHARITABLE TRUST

The Harold J. Miozzi Charitable Trust provides assistance to organizations seeking to improve the quality of life for residents of the City and surrounding area of San Luis Obispo, California. This Trust was established under the will of Mr. Harold J. Miozzi, who died on November 8, 2006. The Foundation focuses on six key areas: animal-related, education, environment, the Catholic Church, fine arts and youth development. For more information, visit www.miozzicharitabletrust.org.

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