

EXPECT MORE TEHAMA

Educational Summit

Educators and various community representatives gathered Wednesday at Rolling Hills Casino for the ninth annual Expect More Tehama Educational Summit with a theme of Create and Cultivate aimed at helping grow local talent to fill work force needs and to raise expectations for Tehama County students beyond that of a high school diploma.

“If businesses and communities are to thrive and grow, we need more of our students to fill key positions. A talent and worker shortage and low unemployment is forcing the region to be more strategic and creative in how we grow our own today and into the future,” read the welcome message.

The event, which typically draws from neighboring counties and beyond, had about 200 people in attendance, said Leadership Team member Kathy Garcia. When a presenter asked who at the summit was not from Tehama County somewhere between half and two-thirds of the audience raised their hands. Many of the attendees come from California State University, Chico and Shasta County.

“It’s all about the power of convening,” Garcia said. *“People get to meet people they normally wouldn’t and foster connections while leveraging resources to make a difference in our community.”*

The idea of the summit is to **connect people in new ways** and **shed light on issues affecting the youth**, but also to **celebrate the good work being done** in so many areas, she said.

Dr. Robert Eyler spoke toward the beginning of the

event about the local economy and the vision cast for it, including challenges and opportunities. Rachel Hatch spoke about community vitality and social infrastructure, including the need for creative peacemaking, active lifestyles and civic engagement such as a neighborhood watch. The goal is to anticipate what will be needed and how it affects community vitality.

Following Hatch’s presentation, she lead a panel that included Dr. Ronald Clark, a dentist in Red Bluff for 43 years, Ed Stroman and Dale Mendenhall of the Physical Therapy and Wellness Center and Lonnie Scott from Red Bluff High School.

One of the first questions asked was what main skill sets are needed today. Clark said it’s **reading, writing and comprehension** as well as a **willingness to learn**. All four panelists said there is a need for **soft skills or social skills**. Over the years of working together, the men have seen a number of successes in growing their own talent.

Stroman said of 35 he has kept in contact with who have come through his doors through the partnership with the high school, six have **become physical or occupational therapists and four have become clinicians**. Six have gone on **to be firefighters or first responders** and five have **become nurses**.

The partnership trains local youth so they can stay and work in their own community. Stroman said as he gets closer to the age for retirement he knows he has people in place who will take care of his business.

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KATHY GARCIA

Clark has had 14 who have graduated as dental hygienists and has one more who will graduate this year as a dental assistant, he said. **It is important for businesses to invest in their community and in training their own to keep from having shortages in the workforce.**

There was a shortage in dental hygienists a number of years ago, which is when the Northern California Dental Society made up of nine of the most northern counties in California stepped in. **The group helped raise \$600,000 to start a program at Shasta College that has expanded to be one of the top 5 percent of programs in the nation.**

Having the partnership with the high school allows students to see early on whether or not they want to go into the dental field without having to waste time and money on higher education first.

Mendenhall said, as a former student in the program, it opened doors and broadened his sense of community.

Asked about advice for businesses, Scott said he recommends they reach out to their schools and see what programs are available.

Leadership Team member Kate Grissom talked with Dru Alejandro, tribal leader for the Paskenta Band of Nomlaki Indians, and Tony Cardenas, Corning Promise Neighborhood Team leader, about the grant that is making a difference to the Corning community.

Through the grant funds acquired by the tribe, all youth in Corning area schools have access to great schools to build a stronger community and families, Alejandro said.

Grant funds are focused toward addressing substance abuse and drop out rates.

Work has been done to strengthen teachers through professional development, the addition of reading coaches, five reading assistants, the bridge to college careers and life skills programs for middle school kids and extended learning programs for after school and

summer school programs.

"It's about creating opportunities and making sure there is a strong support system helping them gain opportunities and eliminating the stumbling blocks," Cardenas said.

Kim Clawson spoke about this year's book in common, "Temple Grandin: How the Girl Who Loved Cows Embraced Autism," and the pending visit of author Grandin to the State Theater on Feb. 23. In addition to handing out more than 500 copies of the book to students, parents and community members, the high school has been incorporating the book into agriculture classes.

There was a presentation by a representative from 4-H on the program and all that it offers, Garcia said.

Red Bluff resident Kelsey King was a first time attendee at Wednesday's event and said she loved that it brings so many parts of the community together. It challenged her to think about whether there are ways, as a small business owner, she can provide opportunities to help grow local community leaders.

"Every piece of my life from the boards I'm involved in to my company and community-based giving are in this room," King said. *"It's good because it helps you realize how much community collaboration goes on."*

Cindy Wolff, executive director for the Center for Health Communities connected to Chico State, was a first-timer and said she liked how the event was a regional approach to meeting the goals and desired outcomes for Tehama County. Her favorite part was the discussion by Hatch on public imagination.

To learn more about the summit or Expect More movement, visit www.expectmoretehama.com.

