December 17, 2019

Law Enforcement is a profession where our job is to help others. As protectors of the community, there is a reluctance for officers and first responders to seek help for ourselves. That sentiment carries over from the cultural stigma associated with individuals seeking help for emotional trauma.

For this reason, I am pleased to write this letter in support of overcoming stigma and creating resources for our residents to seek help in Butte County at the newly developing Center for Learning and Resilience. The Center will offer a unique and exciting opportunity to provide meaningful and lasting solutions to some of the most difficult challenges facing young families in our community.

The 2018 Camp Fire was an emotionally traumatic event that is part of every child and their family and the collective experience of the vast majority the residents living in this community. That common experience provides us with an opportunity to reduce the cultural stigma and build opportunities to heal the culture in a way that proactively addresses emotional trauma and toxic stress. Extensive research documents the mental health issues, both short and long-term, that can impact young children and their caregivers who experience such heartbreaking disasters.

In my position as Butte County Sheriff, I often see the hardships facing young children and their families as they struggle to overcome the traumatic events affecting their lives. Butte County has a long-standing history of substance abuse and generational poverty. Coupled with the significant lack of sufficient resources common to rural communities, Butte County is known to have among the highest rates of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) in California.

Our residents need a central place they can go to be connected to the care providers and mental health services to overcome challenges they face for themselves and their children. They also need services and support to remote and rural areas for families who have geographic, mobile and remote challenges. The Center for Learning and Resilience has been thoughtfully and intentionally designed to offer specialized trauma-informed care and resources to our young children and their caregivers through an innovative and dynamic approach. I strongly support the continued development of the Center as a critical and integral component of our work to heal and rebuild our community.

Regards,

Kory Honea
Sheriff-Coroner
Dear Contributor,

I write today to ask you to consider making a grant to support the launch of the Butte County Center for Learning and Resilience.

Opening in 2020, The Center will bring together under one roof a broad range of services that support the healing and healthy development of Butte County’s young children and their families, and will build the long-term capacity of our community by providing for collaboration and professional development.

Butte County Office of Education is proud to lead the project. We have united the community around an ambitious vision, secured an ideal building in downtown Chico, and raised significant funds. But we need your help.

As you know, our community was devastated by the 2018 Camp Fire. But we’d actually started planning The Center months before. For years, our educators have recognized that far too many Butte County children experience poverty, trauma, and Adverse Childhood Experiences, and that it would take unprecedented collaboration and commitment to help them heal and grow and thrive. The Center already represented that commitment, but once the disaster hit, we knew immediately that the future of the project is inextricable from our community’s recovery.

I am proud that BCOE is leading this effort, and delighted by the commitment of my many counterparts from across our county’s child serving systems. The Butte County Department of Behavioral Health has already provided funding, while First Five of Butte County and a growing list of local partners have committed to co-locating at The Center when it opens in 2020.

We’re looking for additional funders to address a total current funding need of $2.8 million, against a total two-year budget of $5.4 million. To date, BCOE has contributed $750,000 of our own funds, and have secured another nearly $2 million from a mix of public and private sources.

I ask that you join us in launching The Center by making a significant investment at this critical time. I do understand that some foundations do not generally give directly to public agencies. We maintain a hosted fund at the North Valley Community Foundation, and have other fiscal sponsorship options if needed. However, I note that our overhead is just 8% - less than most nonprofits.

The attached overview provides additional detail about the need, The Center, and our progress to date. I’d like the opportunity to talk with you by phone or in person to answer your questions and tell you more about our work, and would appreciate scheduling at your earliest convenience.

Sincerely,

Heather Senske
Senior Director