

April 20, 2008

Message From the Chair Emeritus—Dick Johanson

The County of Fresno is the only public body that has a fiduciary responsibility for the whole. Therefore, supervisors have a platform to create a collaborative culture across public institutions and other sectors. In these complex times, the challenges of public leaders have become more difficult and require higher-level skills. We invite you to attend our upcoming membership forum to listen to candidates for the Fresno County Board of Supervisors, District 5—**Debbie Poochigian** and **Nathan Magsig**--as they discuss critical issues. The event will be held at the University Business Center at Fresno State on Tuesday, April 29 from 7:30 to 8:45 AM. Park only in the UBC lot marked by flags.

Character & Civic Education Conference—Kremen School & Many Sponsors

While as a nation we have focused heavily on technical competence, one could argue it is a crisis of character that has wrecked havoc on our institutions--public, private and nonprofit. If we cannot trust our leaders, we cannot move forward quickly enough to meet the challenges we face globally and locally. If we cannot trust ourselves (how many are committed to self mastery?), how can we choose our leaders wisely? There were many inspiring and sobering comments from the presenters:

- Our educational institutions and society have made inadequate adjustments to changes in reality. School is the place to compensate for the underdevelopment of children.
- Children without preparation and support are intimidated by mainstream systems. All adults need to understand this and teach navigation skills.
- Staff development needs to focus on specific school needs, not the norms of a particular profession. A collaborative culture is critical to success.
- The school culture has the most impact on outcomes (50%), social interactions second greatest (40%) and the students have the least influence (10%). (In other words, changing the context yields the greatest results; focusing on individual students the least.)
- In a healthy school culture, the students help to enforce the rules.
- The primary issue isn't poverty; it's marginalization. Without tools to navigate and a path to the mainstream, people are trapped on the margins. Add perseverance and self-discipline to opportunity and tools and children become successful workers, family members and citizens.
- Character is developed by osmosis. You must experience people who live it to develop it.
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Central Valley Financial Literacy Month

As fiscal crises continue in public, private and nonprofit institutions, it is not surprising that individuals also suffer the consequences of financial illiteracy. There are many organizations teaming together to overcome this deficiency, a collaborative that includes financial institutions, nonprofits, government and the schools. The Central Valley Financial Literacy Initiative is aimed at educating and empowering everyone. Kudos to the City of Fresno for their recent proclamation declaring April financial literacy month. If you wish to engage or want additional information, contact Larry Hodges at larry_hodges@ml.com.

Innovation Showcase for the WET Incubator—May 1—Piccadilly University

The **Claude Laval Water & Energy Technology Incubator** is an outstanding example of community collaboration. On May 1, from 7 to 9:30 AM, experts will discuss water and energy challenges facing our state as they high light cutting-edge technology solutions the WET Incubator's world-class companies are developing. For more information contact lori@cvbi.org or call 292-9033.