

# RAP

## FOUNDATION

Health, Mental Health, Juvenile Intervention

### **Annual Report Fiscal Year 2015-2016**



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## *Message from Chairman*



It is an exciting time at RAP for me, not only because I am serving in my first year as Chair, but also because it's gratifying to see our board and staff so in sync with each other. We're working hard to better address the needs of our clients.

As Chairman, I get to officially introduce our newest board members: Tricia Gehrlein, Clinton Health Matters Initiative; Van Tanner, retired businessman and Palm Desert City Councilman; and Beatriz Gonzalez, Coachella Valley Unified School District. Plus, the Board will be well-served by our returning member Jan Pye, Desert Oasis Health Care.

On behalf of the RAP Board, I want to acknowledge our volunteer readers, committee members, "Fast Pitch" coaches, and youth mentors.

I would like to recognize the importance of our many partnerships. RAP could not be effective if not for the successful collaborative efforts we enjoy with nonprofits service providers, funders, local government and educational institutions.

As an example, RAP partnered with SafeHouse of the Desert to introduce the "What's Up?" mobile application aimed at helping youth throughout the Coachella Valley deal with behavioral health issues.

We also provided incentive to the five local cancer support organizations: Gilda's Desert Cities, American Cancer Society, The Desert Cancer Foundation, the Pendleton Foundation, and Susan G. Komen Inland Empire. This collaboration helps them to increase general public awareness of their respective services.

I'm also pleased that we were able to provide the start-up funding to the Riverside County Latino Commission for Alcohol and Substance Abuse Service Inc., in order to establish two youth residential substance abuse treatment facilities here in eastern Riverside County.

RAP is proud of its continued partnership with County of Riverside on two vital programs this past year. First, RAP provided the funding for the Office on Aging to introduce a Volunteer Coordinator position to recruit, train and assign volunteers throughout the Fourth District. Second, the highly successful Rethink Your Drink (RYD) project in partnership with the County's Public Health agency concluded this year with what we hope and trust will be a lasting legacy.

I look forward to developing and strengthening new relationships with our community partners during my second year at the helm of this great Board of Directors.

Mark Moran, Chairman

The logo for the Regional Access Project Foundation. The letters 'RAP' are in a large, gold, serif font, with a stylized brown and gold arch underneath them. Below the arch, the word 'FOUNDATION' is written in a smaller, brown, serif font.

# RAP FOUNDATION

The Regional Access Project Foundation's Vision, Mission and Values focus on underserved communities and residents of the desert region of Riverside County:

***RAP Vision:*** An enhanced quality of life for all inhabitants of eastern Riverside County.

***RAP Mission:*** The Regional Access Project Foundation provides funding, oversight, technical assistance and guidance to nonprofit, community based organizations or other collaborative groups, which serve the populations of eastern Riverside County in the areas of health, mental health and juvenile intervention.

***RAP Values:*** Integrity, Advocacy, Competence, Sensitivity/Awareness, Accountability, Transparency and adherence to a Code of Ethics.

## **THE YEAR IN REVIEW**

RAP has continued to look at ways to improve our effectiveness in serving our clients through our grant process and by providing capacity-building resources. In the last year, we successfully completed three Request for Proposals (RFP) and one Request for Qualifications (RFQ); we also processed several Small Grant Requests and reviewed the performance of several organizations requesting continued funding.

The **Grant Program** was improved upon this year by utilizing a Committee made up of RAP board members who added to their board duties in order to review funding requests. The Committee reviewed input from our “expert” readers, program staff, and also gained information by participating in “community listening sessions.” They also interviewed applicants as a part of their effort to assist the Board in its decision-making process.

Our commitment to the four year Mental Health Initiative (MHI) was demonstrated by dedicating a greater share of our resources towards addressing mental health issues. We did this by working on increased access, collaboration, innovation and creativity in the focus area. The MHI led to the creation of a Mental Health Committee made up of board members and community leaders with interest and expertise in this area. The Committee provides oversight of the RFP and RFQ processes to ensure funding has the greatest potential for community impact.

Over the past year, the **Technical Assistance Program (TAP)** underwent a comprehensive review process to increase its effectiveness. A committee made up of board members, funders and community partners identified services currently being provided which are effective and those in need of enhancement.

During this review process, TAP continued to provide programs with a high participation rate, such as the University of Riverside Nonprofit Management Certificate program completed by 25 students in the Palm Desert Campus. TAP also offered a variety of workshops including the following: Facilitation Training, Board Roles and Responsibilities/ Ethics, EXCEL, Grant Writing, Branding, Foundation Directory Online, Fundraising Essentials and Form 990 preparation. In addition, we continued to provide meeting space, a resource library and consultants with nonprofit expertise, to assist nonprofits in building their service capacity.

**University of Riverside Nonprofit Management Certificate Program  
Graduation July 10, 2015**



Throughout the year, RAP supported and participated in community events addressing health, mental health and juvenile intervention. During these events, we were able to collaborate with organizations having mutual interests, and we were also able to increase our exposure in the community to make our resources more widely known. We participated in the following events: “Critical Conversations: The Mental Unhealth of Violence” on February 18, 2016 at Cal State University San Bernardino, Palm Desert Campus; the Mecca Resource Fair on October 14, 2015; and the Flying Doctors health fair on September 12, 2015. In addition to sponsoring others, some of which are pictured below.

### **Flying Doctors Event September 12, 2015**



### **Mecca Resource Fair October 14, 2015**



## Indio Middle School Career Day January 14, 2016



## Better Together

Community event 2/24/16



## The Public Health Community Champions April 5, 2016



## Agua 4 All April 8, 2016



## Rotary Math Day May 15, 2016



RAP hosted the Annual Nonprofit Conference on October 21 at the Annenberg Center for Health Sciences in Rancho Mirage. The “Changing Lives, Making Impact” and Desert Fast Pitch conference was attended by approximately 200 people, and it featured the following respected nonprofit sector speakers:

Nancy Berlin, California Association of Nonprofits; Dr. Laura Deitrick, Institute for Nonprofits and Philanthropic Research, University of San Diego; Dr. Peter Long, Blue Shield of California Foundation; and Dr. Beatriz Solis, The California Endowment.

## “Changing Lives, Making Impact” Nonprofit Conference



The Desert Fast Pitch competition followed the conference. The event featured six nonprofit representatives who had received communication training and coaching in quickly telling their organizations' story to potential funders. During the Fast Pitch, the competing nonprofits each presented a three-minute pitch. The organizations included: Angel View, About Families, Raices Cultura, Health Corps, Christopher's Clubhouse and El Sol Neighborhood Educational Centers.

While the judges deliberated, the audience was treated to an inspirational talk by Scott Budnick, Founder and President of the Anti-Recidivism Coalition.

Following the featured speaker, the judges awarded Christopher's Clubhouse and El Sol Neighborhood Educational Centers, with El Sol capturing a third award, as the "Audience Choice."

The 2015 State of Nonprofits in Riverside County Report was presented at RAP's Nonprofit Conference. The Report, commissioned by RAP, was produced by the Caster Family Center for Nonprofit and Philanthropic Research at the University of San Diego. The purpose of the Report was to not only provide a "snapshot" of local demographic and economic conditions, but to also demonstrate that the nonprofit sector is a vital economic contributor to the community. In addition, the Report provides nonprofits with data to better understand local trends.

### **Desert Fast Pitch October 21, 2015**





RAP team members attended the Community Connect Conference on September 25 in Riverside and the Southern California Grantmakers Conference in Los Angeles on September 28. Both conferences were substantive opportunities for nonprofit leaders in the region to network and learn from one another.

RAP recognizes the importance of investing in technology to be more efficient in providing services, and, as a result, we invested in video conferencing to “connect” to audiences in remote areas. We hosted webinars and increased our training sessions. In addition, we were able to introduce new technology in our grant process, transitioning to a full on-line application and review process. We recently extensively renovated our website to be more modern and user friendly.

## **Coachella Valley Youth Leadership**

One of RAP's roles in addressing unmet needs is to serve as an incubator for newborn programs when it is determined necessary. For example, Coachella Valley Youth Leadership (CVYL) was created two years ago by a group of adult volunteers who wanted to serve as mentors to young boys in the eastern Coachella Valley. This volunteer group operated "healing camps" in Mecca, Thermal, Coachella and Desert Hot Springs. Each Healing Camp is an 18-hour weekend exercise. The boys share painful experiences and situations in their lives: Some have experienced abandonment; many have unresolved grief. These conditions, of course, can lead to drug and alcohol abuse, gang affiliation and criminal activity. Lack of self-esteem and adult guidance is most often a contributing factor.

CVYL utilizes the evidence-based training from the National Compadres Network's "Joven Noble Curriculum" on creating the "Healing Circle" program. This framework focuses on identifying unhealthy elements in an individual, family, community or culture and utilizing the available opportunities in the environment to bring about emotional healing.

We are pleased to have this program continue under the Coachella Valley Unified School District starting in August of this year. We look forward to an expansion of the program into more schools, providing a greater opportunities for more young men to participate and become successful.

## **Coachella Valley Youth Leadership Graduation June 9, 2016**



The following organizations received funding through one of the following options: Request for Proposals, Request for Qualifications, Small Grants, Performance Grants, Desert Fast Pitch Grants, as well as direct sponsorships.

## **GRANTS PROGRAM**

### **Organizations Awarded Grants of \$5,000 or more**

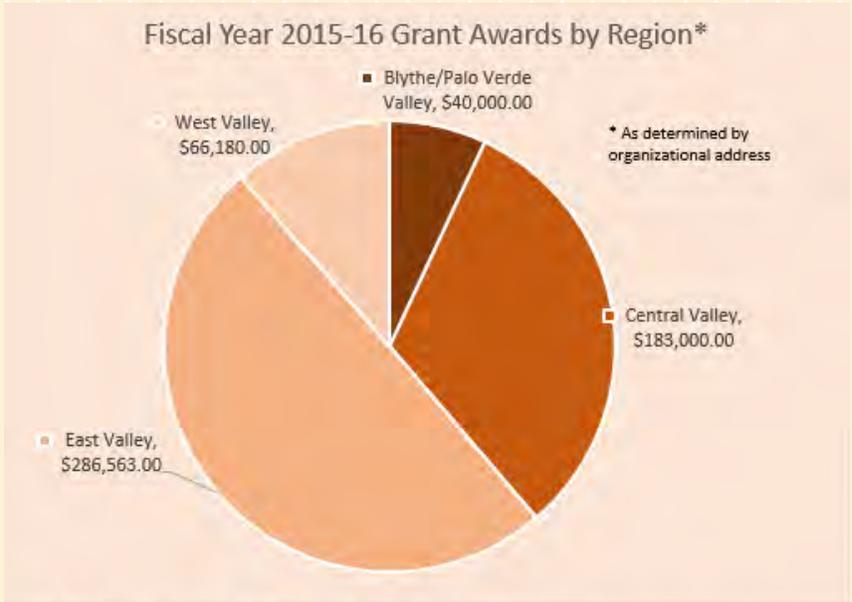
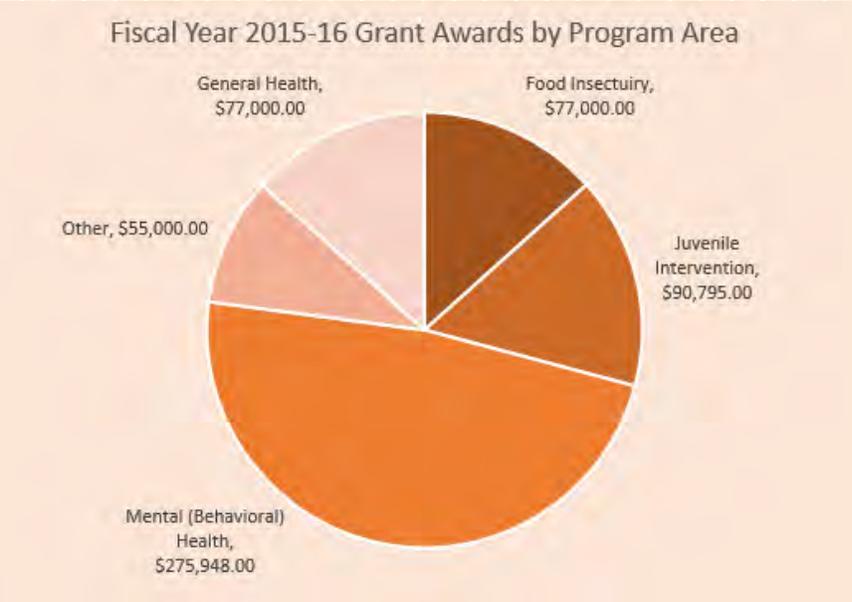
ACT for MS  
American Red Cross - Coachella Valley/Morongo Basin  
Christopher's Clubhouse  
Coachella Valley Economic Partnership Workforce Excellence  
Coachella Valley Unified School District Property Acquisition Corp  
Collaborating For Clients  
Colorado River Senior Center  
Community Action Partnership of Riverside County  
Cove Communities Senior Association (Joslyn Senior Center)  
Desert Healthcare Foundation  
El Sol Neighborhood Educational Center  
Focus on Student Success  
Galilee Center  
Gilda's Club Desert Cities  
Operation Safe House, Inc.  
Riverside County Latino Commission On Alcohol & Drug Abuse Services  
Riverside County Office on Aging  
Safe Schools Desert Cities Corp

### **Organizations Awarded Grants under \$5,000**

About Families Incorporated  
Angel View, Inc.  
Dr. Carreon Foundation  
Family YMCA of the Desert  
Healthcorps, Inc.  
Our Lady of Perpetual Help Catholic School  
Raices Cultura  
Striving for Speech  
Well In the Desert  
World Affairs Council of the Desert

## **Other Support and Sponsorships**

Association of Fundraising Professionals - Palm Desert  
Coachella Valley Economic Partnership  
Community Connect  
CVHS HOSA  
Desert Hot Springs Eagles  
El Sol Neighborhood Educational Centers  
Mecca Family & Farmworker's Service Center  
Operation SafeHouse  
Rotary - Indio  
Senior Inspiration Awards  
United Way of the Inland Empire



East Valley - Indio, Coachella, Thermal, Mecca and North Shore  
 Central Valley - Bermuda Dunes, La Quinta, Palm Desert, Indian Wells, Thousand Palms  
 West Valley - Desert Hot Springs, Palm Springs, Cathedral City, Rancho Mirage

(Unaudited Financial Information)

## **TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM**

The **Technical Assistance Program (TAP)** provides capacity-building services to nonprofits in order to assist them in their effort to achieve financial sustainability. The following organizations received one or more of our services: UCR Certificate in Nonprofit Management, workshops, webinars, consulting services, meeting space and copying services.

### **ORGANIZATIONS RECEIVED TAP SERVICES IN FISCAL YEAR 2015-2016**

About Families  
ACT for MS  
AFP Desert Chapter  
Alternatives to Violence Project  
American Baptist Church  
Angel View  
Animal Samaritans  
Birth Choice of the Desert  
Birth Choices of the Desert  
Black History Committee  
Boo 2 Bullying  
Braille institute  
Bridges of Hope  
Building Healthy Communities  
Call 2 Care  
Carreon Foundation  
Centro Religare  
Christopher's Clubhouse  
Clinicas de Salud del Pueblo  
Colorado River Senior Center  
Community Connect  
Cal State University San Bernardino- Palm Desert Campus  
Coachella Valley Association of Governments Homeless  
Committee  
CVASA – Autism Society  
Coachella Valley Economic Partnership  
Desert AIDS Project  
Desert Best Friends Closet  
Desert CAMFT  
Desert Cancer Foundation

Desert Classic Charities  
Desert Community Foundation  
Desert Mirage Alum Association  
Desert Recreation District  
DHS Community Task Force  
El Sol Educational Services  
Employment Development Depart.  
Fair Foundation  
Family Services Association  
FIND Food Bank  
FOSS  
Friends of CV Link  
Futurenomic's Resources  
Galilee Center  
Galilee Senior center  
General Patton Museum  
Habitat for Humanity  
HARC Inc.  
HealthCorps – Desert Sands Unified School District  
Heart 2 Heart  
Homeless Youth Task Force  
HOPE Collaborative  
INCIGHT  
Inspiring young Hearts  
Integrated Learning Institute  
Jocelyn Senior Center  
JUMP  
Mama's House  
NAMI CV  
Nehemiah Charitable Fund  
Olive Crest  
P.S. Friends of Philharmonic  
Path of Life Ministries  
Planned Parenthood  
Raices Cultura  
Recovery Café  
Rescare – Indio WIN Center  
Riverside County Office on Aging  
Riverside County Volunteer Connect  
Safe Schools of the Desert  
SafeHouse of the Desert

Sober Living Network  
S.O.S - A Ride Home  
Speak Up Now  
Striving for Speech  
Susan G Komen Foundation  
The Joselyn Center  
The Living Desert  
The Narrow Door  
Umbrella Ministries  
Unforgettables Foundation  
United Cerebral Palsy  
VEAP  
Vets Team Up  
Voices for Children  
Volunteers in Medicine  
Well in the Desert  
World Affairs Council of the Desert  
YMCA

### **TAP Workshops Offered**

TOP Facilitation Training – Institute of Cultural Affairs  
Board Roles & Responsibilities/ Ethics Eve Fromberg  
EXCEL Worksheet– John Epps  
Grant Writing 2 day– Carrie Roberts  
Form 990 – Rixon and Associates  
Branding Workshop – Peter Newman  
Foundation Directory Online– Carrie Roberts  
Fundraising Essentials– Jenai Moorehead

# FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

## Statement of Financial Position

(Balance Sheet)

June 30, 2016

### Statement of Financial Position

	Total	2015 for Comparative Purposes Only
<b>Assets</b>		
Cash and Cash Equivalents	\$761,864	\$692,480
Cash Held for Others	24,914	724
Investments - Mutual Funds	1,040,671	1,066,725
Beneficial Interest in Assets Held by Community Foundations	2,106,159	2,238,990
Grants Receivable	11,033	7,104
County Tax Increment Funding Receivable	776,140	785,384
Employee Advances	-	-
Other Assets	48,957	-
Prepaid Expenses	23,921	24,126
Property and Equipment, Net	13,154	22,065
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>4,806,812</b>	<b>4,837,598</b>
<b>Liabilities</b>		
Accounts Payable	11,118	12,541
Accrued Payroll Expenses	44,571	44,328
Grants Payable to Other Exempt Entities	67,750	18,240
Agency Funds Held for Others	1,906	724
Deferred Revenues	3,000	-
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES</b>	<b>128,346</b>	<b>75,843</b>
<b>Net Assets</b>		
Unrestricted	4,621,134	4,679,227
Temporarily Restricted	57,332	82,258
<b>TOTAL NET ASSETS</b>	<b>4,678,466</b>	<b>4,761,755</b>
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS</b>	<b>\$4,806,812</b>	<b>\$4,837,598</b>

\*Audit for Fiscal year 2015-16 to be completed October 2016

## Statement of Activities

Year Ended June 30, 2016

Statement of Activities

	Unrestricted	Temporarily Restricted	Permanently Restricted	Total	2015 For Comparative Purposes Only
<b>SUPPORT AND REVENUES</b>					
Contributions	\$7,000	\$ -	-	\$ 7,000	\$88,082
County Tax Increment Revenue	1,370,949	-	-	1,370,949	1,388,818
Grants	-	48,970	-	48,970	118,808
Investment Income - Realized	78,107	-	-	78,107	135,580
Investment Gains (Losses) - Unrealized	(201,271)	-	-	(201,271)	(114,556)
Other Income, Gains (Losses)	81,756	-	-	81,756	(1,939)
Net Assets Released from Restrictions:					
Restrictions Satisfied by Payments	73,896	(73,896)	-	-	-
<b>TOTAL SUPPORT AND REVENUE</b>	<b>1,410,437</b>	<b>(24,926)</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>1,385,511</b>	<b>1,614,796</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>					
<b>Program Services:</b>					
Grant Allocations to Exempt Entities	620,604	-	-	620,604	525,908
Technical Assistance Program	256,313	-	-	256,313	240,718
Building Healthy Communities	-	-	-	-	234,073
Desert Connect Program	112,345	-	-	112,343	268,805
Coachella Valley Youth Leadership	97,985	-	-	97,985	-
Other Programs	<u>66,632</u>	-	-	<u>66,632</u>	<u>103,092</u>
<b>Total Program Services</b>	<b>1,153,877</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>1,153,877</b>	<b>1,372,596</b>
<b>Support Services:</b>					
Management and General	311,333	-	-	331,333	335,170
Fund-raising	<u>3,590</u>	-	-	<u>3,590</u>	-
<b>Total Support Services</b>	<b>314,923</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>314,923</b>	<b>335,170</b>
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>1,468,800</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>1,468,800</b>	<b>2,707,766</b>
<b>CHANGE IN NET ASSETS</b>	<b>(58,363)</b>	<b>( 24,926)</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>(83,289)</b>	<b>(92,973)</b>
Net Assets, Beginning of Year	4,616,696	82,258	-	4,854,728	4,854,728

\*Audit for Fiscal year 2015-16 to be completed October 2016

## Statement of Functional Expenses

### Year Ended June 30, 2016 Statement of Functional Expenses - Program Services

	Grant Allocations	TAP-Technical Assistance	Youth Leadership	Desert Connect	Other Programs	Total Program Services	2015 For Comparative Purposes Only
<b>Salaries</b>	\$84,708	\$64,095	\$ 51,548	\$ 53,475	\$4,149	\$257,975	\$333,199
<b>Direct Program Costs</b>							
Advertising and Marketing	-	550	1,461	350	6,075	8,436	6,755
Allocated Indirect Costs	-	-	-	-	-	-	10,460
Bank and Investment Fees	-	(2)	-	-	157	155	50
Communications	1,481	2,649	1,720	1,176	-	7,026	9,463
Computer Services	7,168	3,991	1,068	1,500	-	13,727	28,976
Depreciation Expense	960	960	-	-	-	1,920	1,002
Employee Benefits	11,860	13,226	6,002	18,257	341	49,686	63,362
Equipment Lease and Maintenance	718	5,957	56	982	-	7,713	8,256
Event Expenses	188	49,176	-	8	49,692	99,064	47,568
Grants Allocations to Exempt Entities	467,755	6,030	-	10,000	-	483,785	515,838
Insurance	-	-	2,914	-	-	2,914	-
Office Expenses	1,491	2,434	1,292	(23)	-	5,194	16,257
Other Program Expenses	14,804	30,854	13,405	3,617	5,500	68,180	119,636
Payroll Taxes	13,276	11,745	7,547	5,697	288	38,553	30,788
Postage and Printing	26	-	15	-	180	221	6,022
Professional Services	945	9,312	-	-	-	10,257	44,545
Rent	5,175	14,293	-	11,320	-	30,788	52,206
Retirement Plan Expense	4,306	3,447	2,577	2,882	207	13,421	9,556
TAP Assistance to Other Organizations	3,378	32,613	-	-	-	36,189	42,417
Training, Conferences and Meetings	591	2,676	5,152	778	-	9,197	14,140
Travel and Mileage	850	1,747	2,730	1,763	-	7,090	9,827
Workers' Compensation Insurance	724	560	498	563	41	2,386	2,118
<b>Total Program Services</b>	<b>\$620,604</b>	<b>\$256,313</b>	<b>\$97,985</b>	<b>\$112,345</b>	<b>\$66,630</b>	<b>\$1,153,877</b>	<b>\$1,372,596</b>

### Year Ended June 30, 2016 Statement of Functional Expenses - Support Services

	Management & General	Fund Raising	Total Support Services	2015 For Comparative Purposes Only
<b>Salaries</b>	\$137,353	\$2,580	\$139,933	\$126,112
<b>Direct Service Costs</b>				
Advertising and Marketing	3,880	-	3,880	656
Allocated Indirect Costs	-	-	-	(10,434)
Bank and Investment Fees	31,623	-	31,623	33,745
Communications	6,210	-	6,210	8,272
Computer Services	7,742	-	7,742	13,053
Depreciation Expense	8,104	-	8,104	10,911
Dues and Subscriptions	-	-	-	-
Employee Benefits	18,818	42	18,860	39,487
Equipment Expenditures	-	-	-	-
Equipment Lease and Maintenance	1,783	-	1,783	1,777
Event Expenses	416	-	416	2,000
Insurance	12,392	-	12,392	11,938
Office Expenses	7,708	-	7,708	18,246
Other Program Expenses	138	-	138	1,262
Payroll Taxes	18,207	169	18,376	12,515
Postage and Printing	683	-	683	240
Professional Services	23,785	644	24,429	35,541
Rent	15,882	-	15,882	15,495
Retirement Plan Expense	6,953	129	7,082	1,990
TAP Assistance to Other Organizations	270	-	270	2,498
Training, Conferences and Meetings	4,352	-	4,352	4,962
Travel and Mileage	3,788	-	3,788	1,899
Workers' Compensation Insurance	1,246	26	1,272	3,005
<b>Total Support Services</b>	<b>\$311,333</b>	<b>\$3,590</b>	<b>\$314,923</b>	<b>\$335,170</b>

\*Audit for Fiscal year 2015-16 to be completed October 2016

# Newspaper Clips




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Robert D'Amour Founder / Designer



To ensure the personalized attention we view as integral to our high-end, high-quality men's, women's and accessory items our products are only available at our flagship store in Palm Springs, California

## Cancer Support Non-Profits Agree: They're "Better Together for Community"

**Five highly respected local cancer support nonprofits** — Gilda's Club Desert Cities, Desert Cancer Foundation, Susan G. Komen Inland Empire, Pendleton Foundation, and American Cancer Society—are dedicated to serving all those in the Coachella Valley whose lives have been impacted by cancer. They understand that patients as well as their families will need a great deal of support as they embark on the journey that starts when someone hears those three dreaded words, "You have cancer."

But these dedicated nonprofits realize that not everyone is aware of the numerous no-cost services available to them (emotional, educational and social support, funding for medical care, and monies to pay for essentials like gas and groceries while undergoing cancer treatment, to name just a few.) Nor do people always know how to access these services.



That's why Gilda's, Desert Cancer Foundation, Susan G. Komen and Pendleton firmly believe they are "Better Together for Community," and have formed a powerful collaborative by that name.



Spearheaded by Gilda's Club President and CEO Maria Elena Geyer, "Better Together for Community" recently applied for—and has just been awarded—a \$30,000 Mental Health Initiative Grant from the Regional Access Project (RAP). The grant's purpose: to help the collaborating organizations increase awareness of mental health concerns at various stages of cancer. It funds a public awareness and information-sharing project, outreach to several target populations, and creation of new and improved communications tools for the outreach efforts.



The first population group the collaborators will target is eastern Riverside County residents who are most likely to require the emotional (mental health) support services provided by Gilda's Club: those currently impacted by cancer or who are at a higher risk of being diagnosed with cancer, with a focus on un- or under-insured individuals and older adults. The second population group includes African-American and Hispanic residents impacted by cancer, as these groups have high cancer rates but are often underserved.

Among the communication tools being developed are culturally sensitive written materials in English and Spanish that clearly present information about all of the collaborating agencies' services. Also in development: a new mobile-friendly Gilda's Club website that will enable more Riverside County residents to access information about Gilda's and the other Coachella Valley cancer support resources.



Another important part of the project is to hold community awareness events. In the project's second phase, these will include outreach events in somewhat isolated and/or low-income communities such as Desert Highland in Palm Springs and, in the East Coachella Valley, Coachella, Mecca, Thermal and Oasis.

Partnering with the City of La Quinta, "Better Together for Community" held a first cancer outreach event last fall on La Quinta's Civic Center campus. On Saturday, January 30, 2016, the second "Better Together for Community" outreach event will take place at the same location, and everyone from throughout the Coachella Valley is invited to participate.



The outreach event begins at 10 a.m. with a walk around the Civic Center, then a chance to sign giant white ribbons honoring or remembering loved ones. Afterwards, in the Amphitheater, attendees can hear guest speakers and enjoy music and refreshments. And most important of all, there will be lots of opportunities to gather information about what all the participating organizations offer to anyone impacted by cancer.

You don't have to face cancer alone, say "Better Together for Community" partners, and they are ready to make sure everyone on the cancer journey in the Coachella Valley is well served. ■

## Local Nonprofits Profit From RAP's "Fast Pitch" Event

*Two local nonprofits walked off with a total of more than \$45,000 in grant funding as a result of their performances in the Regional Access Project (RAP) Foundation's annual "Desert Fast Pitch" competition.*



The event, which is modeled after the highly successful "Fast Pitch" venture capital competition staged by Los Angeles' Social Ventures Partners, actually takes place over several months among a dozen pre-qualified nonprofits.

These nonprofits receive training and coaching in the art of pitching their organization in an efficient and effective manner to potential funders.

Six finalists are then chosen, and those six organization then compete in the "main event," held in conjunction with RAP's Communications Conference.

"All 12 of these participating nonprofits are winners before the final event takes place," says RAP's executive director Letitia De Lara. "Not only have they had training in telling the story of their organization, but they have already received \$1,500 just for their efforts."

"In addition, the six finalists receive an additional \$1,500 and the opportunity to compete in a real-world environment for additional, larger cash grants."

The biggest winners were Christopher's Clubhouse, which took home the top prize of \$20,000 for their successful pitch, and El Sol Neighborhood Education Centers, which walked off with the \$15,000 "Coaches Most Improved" Award and also the Audience Choice Award of \$10,000. These amounts were in addition to the \$3,000 they had already received.

RAP provided the funds for the first place award and the Audience Choice Award, while the HN and Frances C. Berger Foundation provided the funding for the "Coaches Most Improved" award.

"My enhanced skills will make speaking to potential donors concise and impactful," says Christopher's Clubhouse Founding Director Mikka Moulton. "I originally didn't think it would be difficult to create a three-minute speech as our organization has many important facts, statistics and stories to choose from."

"But that is what made it difficult. Choosing the right ones to make the most impact, as well as creating the correct voice inflection were important takeaways from working with the coach."

Christopher's Clubhouse is dedicated to providing an educational program to empower children and families with the skills to avoid exploitation and predation. For more information, check out their website at [www.christophersclubhouse.org](http://www.christophersclubhouse.org).

El Sol's goal is to "empower our community to lead healthy and comfortable lives with access to health care; safe, affordable housing; opportunities for education; and the leadership skills to eliminate disparities."

In addition to the top two prize winners, competitors included About Families, Inc., Alzheimer's Association, Angel View, Inc., Animal Samaritans, California CareForce, Dr. Carreon Foundation, Family YMCA of the Desert, HelpCorps, Refuge Ranch and Striving for Speech.

Next year's Desert Fast Competition is scheduled for Oct. 26, with a new slate of nonprofits. The Regional Access Project will issue a Call For Applications in February. Monitor the RAP website [www.regionalaccessproject.org](http://www.regionalaccessproject.org) for more information. ■



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**STAFF**

Tim Skogen, Executive Director  
[tiskogen@firsttee.org](mailto:tiskogen@firsttee.org)

Dustin Smith, Program Director  
[dsmith@firsttee.org](mailto:dsmith@firsttee.org)

Iliana Morando, Member Services  
[imorando@firsttee.org](mailto:imorando@firsttee.org)

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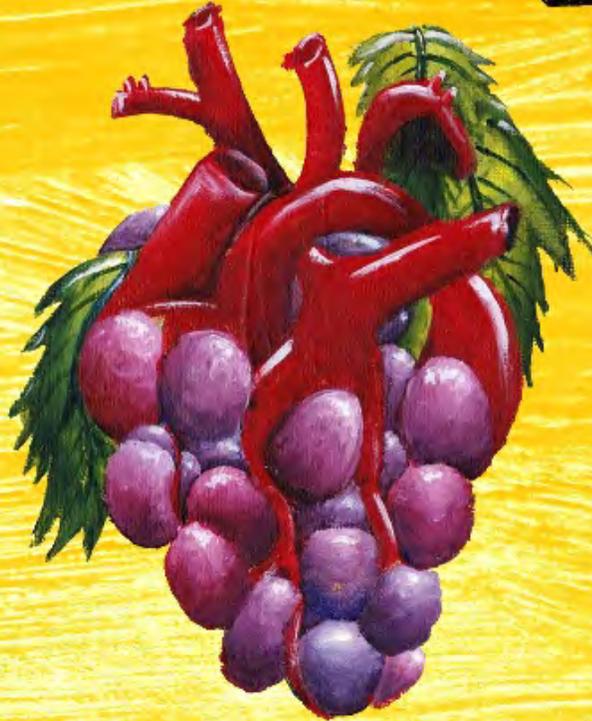
[www.DesertRecreationFoundation.org](http://www.DesertRecreationFoundation.org)

**ADDRESS**

THE FIRST TEE COACHELLA VALLEY  
 74-946 SHERYL AVENUE  
 PALM DESERT, CA 92260  
 760.779.1877  
[www.thefirstteecoachellavalley.org](http://www.thefirstteecoachellavalley.org)

The Hue

# THE HUE



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04/30/16



FREE COMMUNITY EVENT



# Coachella Valley cancer agencies team up



[Barrett Newkirk](#), The Desert Sun 9:53 a.m. PST January 5, 2016

Kennedy Evans, 6, of Palm Desert, dressed as a fairy tale princess, writes on a greeting card at the Gilda's Club Desert Cities' Noogie Fest, the organization's yearly Halloween party. (Photo: The Desert Sun file photo)

Five Coachella Valley cancer nonprofits are teaming up to make sure patients and their loved ones aren't missing out on any locally available help.

Whereas agencies serving the same group often compete for dollars and clients, officials with these groups say it's better to recognize the strength of each organization and work together. They're sharing a \$30,000 grant to encourage collaboration and spread the word about what each can offer, particularly around mental health services.

"We cannot duplicate what (other nonprofits) are doing, and if we work together it can be much better," said Maria Elena Geyer, president and CEO of [Gilda's Club Desert Cities](#), which led the successful application for funding from the Regional Access Project Foundation.

The grant follows a call out from the RAP Foundation for collaborative proposals addressing mental health services. Foundation CEO Leticia De Lara said a series of community meetings last spring made it clear many people did not know where to go for counseling or other mental health services.

"A lack of awareness can be a lack of access," De Lara said.

She noted that the request from the cancer charities was the only successful grant proposal. Along with Gilda's club, the other nonprofits partnering in the effort are the Desert Cancer Foundation, [Susan G. Komen Inland Empire](#), [Pendleton Foundation](#), and the American Cancer Society. Cancer links all five groups, but their primary missions are distinct.

"A lot of people think the American Cancer Society and [Desert Cancer Foundation](#) do the same thing, and we don't. Not even close, said Jennifer Heggie with the [American Cancer Society](#) in Palm Desert.

While some overlapping programming exists, the agencies have distinct central missions. Gilda's Club provides counseling and wellness classes, the Desert Cancer Foundation helps to cover medical expenses, the Pendleton Foundation helps to pay for non-medical needs like utilities, the American Cancer Society is primarily interested in cancer research and Susan G. Komen has a principal mission to end breast cancer and invest in science to find a cure.

The division means people seeking help can be confused about where to turn. The agencies will use the funding to help ensure staff know what each office is offering so they can easily refer clients.

An event in La Quinta later this month will give people a single location to gather information on available services. It's planned for Saturday, Jan. 30, starting at 10 a.m. at the La Quinta Civic Center, 78495 Calle Tampico, La Quinta. It will include a cancer memory walk and guest speakers.

The groups plan to hold other cancer outreach events in isolated or low-income areas of the Coachella Valley such as the Desert Highland neighborhood of Palm Springs and the rural east valley.

*Health and wellness reporter Barrett Newkirk can be reached at (760)778-4767, [barrett.newkirk@desertsun.com](mailto:barrett.newkirk@desertsun.com) or on Twitter @barrettnewkirk.*

## Valley Voice: New effort aims to help at-risk boys

Leticia De Lara, Special to The Desert Sun 10:41 a.m. PDT July 30, 2015



Leticia De Lara, CEO for the Regional Access Project Foundation. (Photo: Robert Hopwood/The Desert Sun)

Troubled youth. It may seem like a relentless downward spiral, but the board of directors of the Regional Access Project Foundation (RAP) has just made a major commitment to turning at-risk boys' lives around.

A year ago RAP provided \$10,000 to support a program called "Healing Circles" with a two-day camp for troubled boys in Mecca. The camp focused on bringing between 20 and 30 boys together to help them to build their coping skills and to heal from traumatic experiences in their young lives.

Several more camps have since been hosted in Mecca, Thermal, Coachella, and Desert Hot Springs. A total of 120 boys have attended these camps and their response has been overwhelmingly favorable.

These "Healing Circle" camps provided a safe environment for teenagers to share the painful experiences and situations in their lives. The youth have shared issues of abandonment, unresolved grief, drug and alcohol abuse, gang affiliation, criminal involvement, mental health issues and lack of self-esteem and adult guidance. We see many boys suffering from depression, domestic violence, family relationship issues and more.

Many of these boys are looking for help and wanting to become productive citizens with quality lives and better economic opportunities. RAP saw that this effort was worthwhile, but we needed someone to pick up the baton and administer this vital program. RAP, as a provider of grant funding and technical expertise, needed a collaboration with another agency.

Enter the Ophelia Project, a girls mentoring program with goals not unlike those envisioned for the fledgling boys project. RAP's Board of Directors recently approved a partnership arrangement with the Ophelia Project so that we can continue to offer and hopefully expand our outreach program to boys who need these services in order to become productive and fulfilled young men.

RAP will be partnering with the Ophelia Project in creating a program to work with at-risk teenage boys.

"Our organization is excited by the prospects for this new program for boys," Susan Francis, President and Chief Executive Officer of the Ophelia Project, told me recently. "I'm so grateful to RAP for providing this opportunity to work together to develop this long overdue program."

I would be remiss if I didn't mention the volunteer mentors who have given so much to this program in the past. Volunteer mentors are men between the ages of 25 to 70 who form an ongoing relationship with their young charges.

The RAP Foundation Board's commitment of \$130,000 towards this project is indication of their belief that boys need help and that mentoring can be effective in turning young lives around. The Ophelia Project's willingness to take this project on indicates their belief that all young lives matter.

Over the next few months, RAP and the Ophelia Project will work together to develop clear program goals and a methodology to test effectiveness. We will be looking for improvements in student attendance, behavior, grades, as well as behavior at home and other criteria.

Young men's ability to succeed in school and become engaged leaders is at stake. In some cases, diversion from a criminal career can and would be diverted to something much more positive for both the individual boy and the community at large.

Together with our volunteer mentors, we can achieve something new and special in our greater desert community.

Leticia De Lara of Indio is CEO of the Regional Access Project Foundation. Email her at [Ldelara@Regionalaccessproject.org](mailto:Ldelara@Regionalaccessproject.org)

# FIND Food Bank gets \$500,000 Feeding America grant

[Kristen Hwang](#), The Desert Sun 4:47 p.m. PDT October 22, 2015

Food is prepared and given at the Coachella Valley Rescue Mission to people in need who are homeless or in a precarious situation. Food is prepared and given at the Coachella Valley Rescue Mission to people in need who are homeless or in a precarious situation.

Every year, the number of people who struggle with food insecurity increases in the Coachella Valley and, every year, local nonprofits struggle to find ways to help families in need. But this year, FIND Food Bank, with the help of Feeding America, hopes to change the way local nonprofits are able to help the community.

Feeding America, a national network of food banks, through the Laura and John Arnold Foundation, has awarded FIND Food Bank a \$500,000 grant to study social and economic instability throughout the valley. FIND Food Bank was one of only five food banks across the country to receive the grant. The three-year grant aims to bring nonprofits together to address issues of poverty, housing and job instability, health outcomes and transportation barriers that all contribute to food insecurity.

"Food insecurity is a symptom of the other things. If you're struggling with food, then of course you're going to be struggling with housing, and if you're struggling with housing, you're probably going to be struggling to find a job," said Heather Vaikona, director of community investment at FIND.

About 14 million children live below the poverty line in the U.S. The problem of food insecurity in the valley is pressing and growing quickly, Vaikona said.

"In 2009, FIND was serving maybe 50,000 residents per month. This year, we serve 95,000 each month. More than half of Coachella Valley families struggle to make ends meet," she said. "The need is through the roof, and it's continuing to climb."

FIND Food Bank will partner with United Way of the Desert, the Regional Access Project Foundation, the Desert Healthcare District, the Riverside County Economic Development Agency and the University of Southern California's Sol Price School of Public Policy.

During the first year of the grant, USC's School of Public Policy will help FIND Food Bank conduct a needs assessment that looks at what specific issues in the valley affect families' ability to feed themselves. Gary Painter, director of social policy in the Sol Price Center for Social Innovation, will help put together a database to give valley nonprofits a starting point for their work.



Desert Sands, Palm Springs and Coachella Valley unified school districts work with the Boys and Girls Clubs of Coachella Valley during the summer to ensure that kids have plenty to eat. (Photo: Kristen Hwang, The Desert Sun)

"We want to be able to tell the story of economic development, where the jobs are, public safety, how kids are doing in school and social connectiveness in communities," Painter said. "We need to be able to see if the interventions are having the desired effect."

Painter said bringing nonprofits throughout the valley together and giving them a chance to do evidence-based work was a "new solution to a longstanding problem."

"It's not just one nonprofit working on poverty. It's the recognition that poverty is a multifaceted issue," Painter said

Vaikona said at the end of the three years, FIND Food Bank and its partner organizations hope to have concrete plans in place to ensure that "every Coachella Valley family (is) healthy, happy and sustaining."

"The valley is interesting because it's beautiful and it's a great place to live, but there's certainly a chasm between wealth and the families struggling to live," Vaikona said.

Together, Palm Springs Unified, Coachella Valley Unified and Desert Sands Unified school districts have more than 71,000 students. Of those students, more than 75 percent of them qualify for free or reduced price meals at school.

In all three school districts, the percentage of needy students is high: 87 percent in CVUSD, 83 percent in PSUSD and 68 percent in DSUSD qualify for free or reduced price meals.

Food insecurity is such a pressing problem that CVUSD applied for and received Provision 2 of the federal School Breakfast Program and National School Lunch Program, which allows them to serve meals free to every student during the school year regardless of whether the students qualifies for free or reduced price meals.

Palm Springs Unified has also taken steps to provide as many free meals as possible. Breakfast is served free to every student, and students who qualify for reduced price meals get lunch and supper at no cost.

FIND Food Bank and its partner organizations' work will be based on accountability. The groups will look at whether the economic and social data that USC collects is changing during the three-year grant and will adjust their interventions accordingly.

"Everybody is working their socks off, but sometimes we can't step back and look at what's really going on. We know anecdotally or symptomatically what's happening because we know the people we serve, but sometimes it can be hard to see clearly what the issues are," Vaikona said.

"This will help us respond innovatively to make a real difference."

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## Regional Access Project Foundation Information

73-710 Fred Waring Dr. # 102  
Palm Desert, CA 92260

Office Phone: (760) 674-9992  
Web Site: [www.RAPFoundation.org](http://www.RAPFoundation.org)

501C (3) Public Benefit Corporation  
Federal Tax ID: 33-0547453

### **Staff:**

Leticia De Lara, Chief Executive Officer

Eva Guenther-James, Grants Manager

Amalia Coyt, TAP Manager

Mireya Reyes, Executive Assistant, Special Projects

Stuart McClain, Controller

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