

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Field of Dreams Brings Supported Education and Employment to Solano County

SOLANO COUNTY, Calif., July 26, 2007 — Field of Dreams, a new farming and business program, empowers people with disabilities and mental health consumers through supported education and employment. The program was created by the Neighborhood of Dreams, developed by Crestwood Behavioral Health and Dreamcatchers Empowerment Network, in collaboration with Solano Community College and Solano County Health and Human Services.

Solano Community College's Disability Services Program and the Neighborhood of Dreams have established an adapted horticulture (gardening) course, which offers a mainstream setting for nurturing employment and life skills among adults with developmental disabilities and mental health issues. The course is the first of possibly several that will lead individuals to a Job Direct Certificate in entry-level horticulture careers (nursery, landscaping, farming, etc).

"Integrating individuals with challenges into the mainstream student population is important for everyone involved," said Ron Nelson, Retired Coordinator for the Disability Services Program at Solano Community College. "Not only does the new program provide an opportunity for learning valuable work and life skills, it also helps break down stigma or misperceptions about people with disabilities and mental health issues."

"The Field of Dreams program is literally the first seed in what we hope will grow to be a garden of opportunities for developmentally disabled adults and clients continuing on the path of mental health recovery," said EJ Hullana, Neighborhood of Dreams Coordinator and Dreamcatchers Empowerment Network Program Administrator.

An innovative use of California Mental Health Services Act (MHSA) funding, the Field of Dreams program is one of the first to work directly with an educational institution to integrate mental health clients into the college education system.

As Solano County focuses on supporting local organic farming in the Suisun Valley, the Field of Dreams program and its participants enjoy increased potential to make a positive impact on the community. Ultimately, the program aims to create an on-campus business that employs trained students and provides options for disabled and disadvantaged individuals as they transition to independence.

Open House – Thursday, July 26

An open house for the Field of Dreams program will be held on Thursday, July 26, 2007 at 11:00 a.m. in the Horticulture Facility, Building 1000 at Solano Community College 4000 Suisun Valley Road, Fairfield.

About Solano Community College

Established in 1945 as Vallejo Junior College, Solano Community College is part of California's public community college system of 109 campuses in 72 districts across the state. The College's service area encompasses the communities of Benicia, Dixon, Fairfield, Suisun, Vacaville, Vallejo and Winters, as well as Travis Air Force Base. The 192-acre campus houses facilities, programs, staff and services for a student population of 11,000 and offers academic study and occupational training to all area residents.

About the Neighborhood of Dreams

Crestwood Behavioral Health, Inc. and the Dreamcatchers Empowerment Network have collaborated to provide Solano County with the Neighborhood of Dreams, funded by the Mental Health Services Act. Providing services that assist the person-centered recovery of each individual in a supportive learning environment, the Neighborhood of Dreams partners with community agencies to offer wellness and recovery-oriented services at centers throughout the county. The program offers support for each individual's recovery through an array of learning opportunities, development of meaningful roles and relationships, and empowerment.

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