

A PROPOSAL TO THE CALIFORNIA SOCIETY FOR BETTER LIVING

Dear Jane Ryanman;

I am submitting the following grant proposal in the hopes that the California Society for Better Living will support us at the Tuolumne County Green Cross in its efforts to combat rampant substance abuse in our county with a \$15,000 grant. The program we are trying to start is called *Affirming Brilliant Choices*, which is focused on helping students of all ages make more intelligent choices about the substances they wish to use. We are choosing to approach you about this program because it is our understanding that the California Society for Better Living has helped similar programs for other nonprofit organizations like ours in the past with a very generous grant, and it was through your grants that those organizations were able to keep their programs alive and able to serve their community's needs.

This is actually the second time we've approached your organization for a grant; the first time was last month at the Community Resource Convention in Sacramento, CA where we first learned of your organization. We talked to Oliver Soxkov about what kinds of grants your organization provides and whether your organization would be interested in helping out one like ours; Oliver mentioned that although your organization was largely complete with their grant proposal acceptance for this year, we should still submit one if we so desire because sometimes exceptions can be made for the right idea.

This grant proposal package contains information about our program, *Affirming Brilliant Choices* and specific information about its goals and foundations. The basics of the program is that, if you don't already know, Tuolumne County has a notorious substance abuse problem; of all the counties in California, Tuolumne is the only one where its substance abuse problem has either tripled or quadrupled since 1988. We at the Tuolumne County Green Cross feel that it is our duty to do something about this problem in our county, but to also do it in such a way that doesn't encroach upon a person's right to make their own choices in their life. Therefore, the *Affirming Brilliant Choices* program is meant to focus on the students of the county and to teach them what we feel would be the proper knowledge about those choices they wish to make about substance use.

Furthermore, this grant proposal includes information about what we would like to do with *Affirming Brilliant Choices*, why we feel that this program will work to help the people in our county, what we expect will happen once we begin to implement the program, what criteria we will use to determine success and/or failure of the program and what we will do should the program fail to meet its expectations. We have also included an operating budget plan for the program.

If you have any further questions about our grant proposal, we can be reached by phone at (221) 791-1225 or by email at info@tcgc.org; if you so wish, we can also set up a meeting in order to provide more information to you in person. We appreciate the time you've given us concerning this grant proposal, and we look forward to hearing from you soon. Thanks again!

Sincerely,
Angela Torres
Managing Director of the Tuolumne County Green Cross

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Since 1971 under the tutelage of the Tuolumne County Red Cross, the Tuolumne County Substance Watch has helped thousands of people overcome their problems with substance abuse and given them a second chance in life. But the Substance Watch—now under the support of the Tuolumne County Green Cross—suffered a major blow in 2008 when the County Seat of Tuolumne County released a shocking report about the level of substance abuse in this county. Since 1988 the number of substance abuse-related incidences have tripled, and the amount of students from seventh grade to college-age who have admitted to using or abusing substances have quadrupled. This county always has had a notorious problem with substance abuse over the past many decades and tried to face it head on... but this damning report revealed that we weren't doing enough to fix the real issues, only merely patching up the cracks with bandages.

With a newfound resolve, the Tuolumne County Green Cross chose to create a new program to work with the Substance Watch program, titled *Affirming Brilliant Choices*. The general goal of this program is to go right to the root of the issue and attempt to stop substance abuse before it starts by focusing on those we feel will benefit the most from our efforts: the school students of Tuolumne County. Specifically, the *Affirming Brilliant Choices* program will focus on three main factors: grade school (K-12) students, college-level students, and the friends & family of those students. What this program will attempt to do is teach students about the problems substance abuse creates in order to encourage them to not allow them to happen, as well as give them resources to allow them to practice safe-drug use techniques, and also help form stronger bonds with their peers. In the end we hope that we can curb the number of substance abuse-related incidences in this county and help make sure substance abuse is no longer a problem.

Some of the funding for this program will come from the Tuolumne County Green Cross' operating budget. However, most of it will ideally come from grant money awarded to the program. The total yearly operating cost is estimated between \$35,000-\$40,000/year, with only \$15,000-\$20,000 of it coming from the TCGC's operating budget. Expansion plans include a wider distribution of materials over various medium, potential celebrity spokespersons, and higher quality materials.

Since 1868, the Tuolumne County Red Cross served the needs of the people of Tuolumne County. As social needs changed and new problems arose, the Tuolumne County Red Cross was always there to give someone a hand up. When the Tuolumne County Red Cross was forced to shut down in 2005, almost all of its staff and programs were transferred into the newly formed Tuolumne County Green Cross; despite it's slightly different name, its goals and dedication to the county has not changed. We serve the whole of the county; from the millions in the Sonora Metropolitan Area down to the hundreds over in Angel's Camp, to the historical Columbia to the ultra-modern Deadwood, there isn't a single inch of the 2,274 sq.mi that we don't have a hand in helping with.

GOAL:

Our new education campaign, *Affirming Brilliant Choices*, will help students and other young people know more about substance use and substance abuse, and to, in time, make informed choices about what they put into their bodies; this will ultimately have an affect on substance abuse-related incidences in the County.

(“Substance [ab]use” covers any kind of drug one willingly puts into their body, be it alcohol, cigarettes/nicotine, “hard” drugs such as cocaine or heroin, or sometimes as relatively benign as caffeine or common prescription medications. “Incidences” includes, but are not limited to, arrests made from the purchase and sale of illegal substances, crimes committed while under the influence of a substance, accidental overdoses requiring an emergency hospital visit, or maybe the problems a family member has with someone’s substance use, or even issues the user has with themselves.)

OBJECTIVES:

The Tuolumne County Green Cross will many focus on those who are “students”, which basically covers everyone between Kindergarten age all the way through college. However, given the fact that “students” cover both minors and adults, our objectives are thusly two-fold, with a third, “side” objective, which can be applied to all students, and the people they know:

- 1) K-12 MINORS: Bring a broader education program for K-12 School students and their parents to instill a stronger knowledge of drugs and their effects while the minds of young students are still developing. The key focus for students who are still minors is that there is still an opportunity to create knowledge that is long lasting throughout the life of the child as well as incorporating their parents into the program.
- 2) COLLEGE-LEVEL ADULTS: Reach out to young adults over the age of 18 and provide educational resources—both informative and entertaining—about the kinds of drugs they may come in contact with, via their peers, and safe using practices; thus allowing them to make educated decisions of what they choose to put into their bodies as well as making them conscious of safer ways to use drugs. The thing to consider is that, usually by the time someone becomes an adult, they’ve already made the choice on whether or not they will ever try drugs, and at this point we feel it is necessary to merely discuss ways to make their substance use as safe and harmless as possible.
- 3) ALL STUDENTS: We also wish to work with students, as well as their friends and family, find ways to connect with others on both sides of the issues. That is to say, if the student chooses to use any particular substance, or has a friend or family member that does, we want to look for ways for them to connect with them; to strengthen the links and bonds—if not actually creating new ones—that may have been lost because of someone’s choice to use substances.

OUTCOME:

Within five years we expect to see a minor shift towards our ideal outcome, and within ten years we anticipate a significant level of change. The long term effects of this program will definitely be felt by everyone in the county, and hopefully this program will serve as a template for similar programs nationwide.

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K-12 MINORS: Over time there will be either a drop in how many children under the age of 18 have tried and/or use drugs.

** Drugs are a choice that adults should only make and not for children; the less children who end up using drugs ideally means more children focused on their school and family!

COLLEGE-LEVEL ADULTS: Ideally the rate of how many adults will have tried and/or use drugs will at least level out, if not decrease. But regardless of the percentage of how many young adults choose to use drugs, the rate of those who claim they made a completely educated choice about their substance use, as well as safe using practices, will increase. Likewise, there will be a marked decrease in the number of young adults who use a drug and wind up going to the hospital because of they did not practice safe drug use; either they ended up overdosing or getting into an accident because they were under the influence.

** People who end up in the hospital because of drugs do so only because they didn't practice safe substance use. But with more people making smarter decisions, that means less people in the hospital because of substance abuse, and this gives the hospital itself more time, money and energy to spend on other people.

ALL STUDENTS: There may not be any specific way to measure whether or not the relationships between students and the people in their lives—regardless of which one of the two chose to use substances—will see a marked change in value and quality, apart from random polling every year or other set period. Were that to happen, we just might see more and more people being able to accept—or at least choosing to not reject—a student, their friend or family member who is known to be using drugs, and ultimately living overall happier lives.

** Many problems that friends and families face concerning drugs may have to do with the complications that the user creates because of their choices (or from them denying it to others), but also because of what their friends and families themselves do to the user, possibly out of fear or nativity. If we work to help bring friends and families closer towards understanding and reconciliation of a user's choices, then we also work towards making everyone's lives a little bit happier.

It is not the goal of the Tuolumne County Green Cross to condemn users or non-users, nor the choices they make in life. Instead, we wish to work with people come to terms with the choices they make—be it what they put inside their bodies or how they react to someone they know who does—as well as help others control the choices they made, and not let their choices control and/or hurt themselves and the people around them.

Ultimately, achievement of the Tuolumne County Green Cross's goals concerning helping people make informed and educated choices about what they put into they're bodies will means an overall increase in the quality of life of everyone in the county, state and even nation... and not just the life of the individual themselves. For example, there are so many ruined lives created because of drunk drivers, many of which are college students coming home from a party... and yet all of those accidents could have been prevented if each drunk driver simply decided to get a friend to drive them or to take a taxi home. It is the ultimate hopes of the Tuolumne County Green Cross that if we all work hard enough, we can make sure that the future of the students of Tuolumne County will remain full of potential and promise, rather than have their lives be destroyed because of a single mistake done because someone practiced unsafe substance use.

METHODS:

Last week, we at the Tuolumne County Green Cross revealed the first pieces of information about *Affirming Brilliant Choices*, our exciting new project aimed at helping the students of Tuolumne County be more conscious and aware of substance use and abuse. As previously discussed, our main focus are the students of Tuolumne County's schools; because “students” are either K-12 minors, or college-age adults, we have two specific objectives, as well as an overreaching third objective, that the TCGC believes will fulfill their ambitions. Over the next year and up to five years from now, we will be focusing on implementing the foundations of these three objectives, while six to ten years from now we will be nurturing each objective to its fullest potential. These key objectives are:

- 1) Creating a broader educational program to help educate K-12 students and other minors under the age of 18 about drugs and alcohol, and the effects they have on not only themselves but the people around them.
- 2) Providing educational resources for young adults between the ages of 18 and 29 about the kinds of substances they may come in contact with; the goal being to allow them to make educated decisions about what they put into their systems as well as practicing safe substance use.
- 3) Create ways for users and non-users alike to connect and stay close to one another, despite what they may feel about the other's choices

A) K-12 STUDENT EDUCATION

- Current statistics of Tuolumne County:
 - 6th grade: 1% tried alcohol, weed, other drugs
 - 8th grade: 10% alcohol, 5% cigarettes, 2% weed, 0.6% other drugs
 - 12th grade: 35% alcohol, 12% cigarettes, 9% weed, 2% other drugs
- Studies show that children use drugs because they think it's cool and other people use it, and little know about the risks to themselves and what the substances do.
- Various other studies show how regular discussion and education about substance use and abuse greatly decreases children use of substances:
 - One school spends a week every school year: by 12th grade: 25% alcohol, 13% cigarettes, 8% weed, 2% other
 - One school spends a month every school year: by 12th grade: 12% alcohol, 8% cigarettes, 4% weed, 1% other
 - One school spends a week every two months in school year: by 12th grade: 10% alcohol, 7% cigarettes, 5% weed, 1.4% other
- These programs also affect educational status of students:
 - The first school has a 53% college admission rate
 - The second school has a 75% college admission rate
 - The third school has a 85% college admission rate

It is to our understanding of the facts that creating a lesson plan that brings the realities of substance (ab)use to the minds of grade school students (K-12) aides in reduction of the number of children who have tried and/or use (on a regular basis) any form of substance. Therefore, it is the goal of the TCGC

to formalize a lesson plan that can be taught at all schools, in order to create a substantial shift in the way children approach substance (ab)use.

This upgraded lesson plan will include teaching students:

- The facts and realities of substance (ab)use
- The different kinds of substance use (including pain medication like aspirin, and substances in beverages like caffeine)
- That there is a difference between substance use and substance abuse
- That substance use is a decision for adults to make, not children
- That it would be in their best interest to wait until they become adults before choosing to use any substances (alcohol and tobacco included)

B) COLLEGE-LEVEL STUDENTS

Two colleges in Tuolumne County: University of California, Moose River and Community College of Twain Harte.

Statistics on ecstasy use of two colleges:

- IN 2005, no programs/classes: hospital admissions for ecstasy overdose: 125 students (85 from UCMR, 40 from CCTH)
- In 2006, first of programs/classes at UCMR, but none at CCTH: 104 students (62 from UCMR, 42 from CCTH)
- By 2008, programs/classes at both UCMR and CCTH: 35 students (22 from UCMR, 13 from CCTH)
- However, the number of young adults between 18-35 admitted from 2003 and 2008 stayed relatively consistent; this shows how having access to information about drugs allows people to make educated decisions and practice safe use

It is the belief of the TCGC that once someone becomes an adult, they are free to choose what substance they wish to use or not—caffeine, aspirin, alcohol, tobacco, and so forth, are all substances that are put into their system for some kind of benefit or use. But overuse of any of these substances can cause a great deal of problems. Therefore, in order to achieve our goals with adult college-level students, we need to focus on a providing harm reduction functions as well as create a knowledge sharing system that allows college-level students to know more about what they wish to get involved with.

The specific method of achieving our goals include:

- Providing harm reduction services through various campus medical centers, such as needle exchanges, drug testing facilities (allowing a user to know if their substance is exactly what they expect it to be, or if it has been cut with something they didn't expect) and harm reduction features that the local environment sees fit to provide
- Providing resources to allow these students to learn more about the substances they wish to get involved with in an a confidential manner, free from any kind of condemnation.
- Advertisement of these features in colleges, and making access to them extremely easy

C) OPENING A DIALOGUE

In our studies of why students use substances, we have learned that:

- 42% admit to using substances to “have a good time”
- 23% admit to using substances to “relieve the pressures of life and/or school”
- 37% admit to using substances to “escape”, or because their relationships with friends and family has soured because of substance use, and their substance of choice is all they have left
- 2% admit to using drugs for other reasons

⇒ (Percentages are +/- 3%; some overlap has occurred in figures, as such, figured will not add to 100%)

Over one-third of students (37%) using substances admitted to using them because of a poor relationship with their friends and family; either their substance use created their poor relationship situation, or because of their poor relationships they turned to substance use.

However, we believe that if we can strengthen the relationships between a substance using-student and their friends and/or family, their reasons for using substances on a more regular basis—if at all—may disappear. Therefore, we will create within the scope of *Affirming Brilliant Choices* a program that attempts to recreate old bonds or form new bonds between a substance using-student and their close friends and/or family; this program won't be necessarily focused on trying to prevent the student from using substances, however we believe that a student may choose to use less—if not stop using all together—when the relationship between the student and their friends and/or family becomes to strengthen.

The specific method of achieving our goals include:

- Creating a hands-on system of resolution where the substance-using student and their friends and/or family are brought together to try to resolve the conflicts between them
- Creating a hands-off system of resolution where both a student and their friends and/or family members are introduced to literature that guides them to ask the tough questions between one another and to allow them a chance to work out their issues on their own; this literature will range from merely starting the dialog to actually guiding the dialog along.
- Creating a system of literature for parents that gives discuss topics and tips to help them in their task to talk with their K-12 child(ren) about what substance use and abuse is
- Advertisement for these systems for students, friends and family to know that they actually exist, focused not on condemnation but on healing together.

TIMELINE:

Implementation of all systems will go as follows:

FIRST YEAR:

- Implement system as-is, but only to a small test bed of schools (specifically one K-6, one 7-8, and one 9-12 school for the K-12 system and one college for the College-level system)
- If successful as-is, implement to all other schools in the next year.
- If not as successful, record successes and failures of system, make edits to material

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- Also make note of where in this system that a strengthening of focus is required

SECOND to FIFTH YEAR:

- If previous year is not successful, implement revised system this year to same schools as the previous year.
- If successful as-is, implement to all other schools.
- If not as successful, record flaws of updated system and make further edits to material.
- Continue to learn and implement changes for next year

SIXTH to TENTH YEAR:

- If previous five years were never “successful”, discontinue program.
- If any of the previous years were successful, continue implementation of program to all schools in the county.

STAFFING:

Angela Torres is the Tuolumne County Green Cross's Managing Director. She has worked for the Green Cross, as well as the previous Red Cross, for the past 15 years. In that time Angela oversaw a great number of changes and additions to both the Red and Green Cross, and lead a number of successful substance rehabilitation programs for both organizations. Angela Torres is joined by 15 full-time, 35 part-time and 65 volunteers from the Tuolumne County Green Cross in the *Affirming Brilliant Choices* program, including two children's specialists, five substance abuse councilors, and ten training managers; all of which are dedicated towards helping get off the ground this new effort to help Tuolumne County citizens make a clean break.

EVALUATION

Given Tuolumne County's notoriously high substance-abuse rate, the first real signs of success in combating this disease is by the mere fact that there exists a program like our “Affirming Brilliant Choices”, or “ABC”, program. But having this program alone can only mean so much, so it is extremely important for us to also make sure it makes a very visible impact in the county.

The overall *Affirming Brilliant Choices* program has a three-fold focus on students; a program for K-12 students, a program for college-level students, and a program for the friends and family of those students to build a stronger relationship with them. As such, our evaluation of what constitutes a successful application of *Affirming Brilliant Choices* depends on the individual success of each of the three sub-programs. We've estimated between one and five years for changes to be made initially visible, and between six to ten years for these changes to have a completely lasting effect on the county. More specifically, however, success for each of the individual programs have their own criteria for evaluation.

K-12 Minor Student Program:

The criteria for success of this program would be based on specific changes within grade school students:

- 4) A significant reduction of how many students have tried and/or regularly use any kind of substance
- 5) A significant reduction of how many students believe using substances is “cool” or makes them “cooler”
- 6) A significant increase in how many students choose to wait until adulthood before deciding upon using drugs
- 7) A significant increase in how many students accurately understand what the effects of various substances are, as well as why an adult would use them
- 8) A significant increase in how many students say they've had a “good” discussion with their parents on the topic of substance use and abuse
- 9) A significant reduction of how many students are admitted to the hospital for any kind of substance (ab)use issue

Failure of this program will be based on results that run contrary to our stated goals. Specifically, if after five years of implementing this program there is either:

- no change,
- changes that is opposite of our stated goals, or,
- a change that falls within our criteria of success but to a degree that falls within the margin of error set by the previous years before the implementation of the program,
...then this program “failed”.

Study of the success of these criteria will depend on the criteria themselves:

- For 1 through 5: Surveys performed by a confidential questionnaire filled by some to all students in some to all schools across the county; this will provide a quantitative result for us to compare on a year-to-year basis.
- For 6: Confidential data acquired from various hospitals from across the county will reveal rate of change in hospital admissions for drug-related problems; this will provide a quantitative result for us to compare on a year-to-year basis.

College-level Adult Student Program:

The criteria for success of this program would be based on specific changes within college-level students:

- 1) A significant reduction of how many students regularly use any kind of non-alcoholic, non-tobacco substance
- 2) A less significant reduction of how many students regularly use alcohol
- 3) A less significant reduction of how many students regularly use tobacco
- 4) A significant increase in how many students accurately understand what the effects of various substances are
- 5) A significant increase in how many students feel they have a more educated idea of the substances that they can come in contact with, as well as claim that this knowledge helped them choose to use substances in a safer manner than before, if not choose to avoid using substances all-together
- 6) A significant reduction of how many students are admitted to the hospital for any kind of substance (ab)use issue

Failure of this program will be based on results that run contrary to our stated goals. Specifically, if after five years of implementing this program there is either:

- no change,
- changes that is opposite of our stated goals, or,
- a change that falls within our criteria of success but to a degree that falls within the margin of error set by the previous years before the implementation of the program,
...then this program “failed”.

Study of the success of these criteria will depend on the criteria themselves:

- For 1 through 5: Surveys performed by a confidential questionnaire filled by some students at all higher education schools across the county, given either to random classes at each school or by a questionnaire handed out by several physical survey takers in various high traffic areas at each campus; this will provide a quantitative result for us to compare on a year-to-year basis.
- Also for 1 through 3; because alcohol and tobacco use are more commonly used and accepted by users, although we still expect a reduction in how many be use, we don't anticipate it will be reduced at an equal rate from one another and when compared to other substances which may or may not be as equally accepted. Therefore, we are focused on a “less significant” reduction in alcohol and tobacco use in the quantitative results we acquire using the above methods.
- For 6: Confidential data acquired from various hospitals from across the county will reveal rate of change in hospital admissions for drug-related problems; this will provide a quantitative result for us to compare on a year-to-year basis.

All Student's Friends & Family Relationship Program:

The criteria for success of this program would be based on specific changes within college-level students:

- 1) A significant strengthening of the relationship between a student and their friends and family
- 2) A significant reduction in problems and issues the topic of drugs causes for the student and their friends and family

Failure of this program will be based on results that run contrary to our stated goals. Specifically, if after five years of implementing this program there is either:

- no change, or,
- changes that is opposite of our stated goals

...then this program “failed”.

Study of the success of these criteria will depend on:

- For K-12 Students: Surveys performed by a confidential questionnaire filled by some to all students in some to all schools across the county; this will provide a quantitative result for us to compare on a year-to-year basis.
- For College-level students: Surveys performed by a confidential questionnaire filled by some students at all higher education schools across the county, given either to random classes at each school or by a questionnaire handed out by several physical survey takers in various high traffic areas at each campus; this will provide a quantitative result for us to compare on a year-to-year basis.

Overall Program:

Success for the overall state of this program will be based on how well all three programs perform. The minimum level of acceptable success will be based on if two programs “succeed” while only one “fails”; however extra steps would need to be taken to help the one “failing” program become more successful.

If after five years only one or none of the programs are successful—that is, if two or all of the programs fail to meet their criteria for success—then this overall program “failed” and will thus be terminated.

SUSTAINABILITY

Base sustainability of this program will be guaranteed for a minimum of five years by funds provided by the Tuolumne County Green Cross' operating budget. The TCGC's budget itself comes primarily from donations provided by both corporate and individual sponsors. The projected annual operating budget for the *Affirming Brilliant Choices* program is estimated to be between \$35,000-\$40,000, and will increase by \$5,000 a year, of which \$15,000-\$20,000 of that is coming from the operating budget of the TCGC. The rest of the funding will come from grants acquired from various organizations.

Further sustainability of the *Affirming Brilliant Choices* Program after the first five years depends on the success of the program in those five years. If there is no manner of success, or only a nominal success in those five years, then the operating budget for the *Affirming Brilliant Choices* Program might be best used elsewhere. If, however, the *Affirming Brilliant Choices* Program is a significant success, then its operating budget may be increased further, depending on how the operating manager sees fit in that time.

BUDGET

Operating Budget for *Affirming Brilliant Choices* Program, 2010:

<u>EXPENSES</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
◆ Program Consultant (fee and expenses) ⇒ Development of materials based on program goals ⇒ Guiding implementation of program and materials	\$10,000
◆ Third-party design studio ⇒ For physical design and creation of program materials ⇒ Printing costs of program materials ⇒ Other distribution costs (advertising on internet, video, television, etc)	\$15,000-\$20,000
◆ Teacher training program ⇒ To train teachers about program and implementation of materials	\$10 per teacher (~500 teacher/county) (~\$5000 total)
◆ Compensation for volunteer staff ⇒ Travel costs for in-person surveys at various schools and colleges	~\$5000
<u>TOTAL EXPENSES</u>	<u>\$40,000</u>

CONCLUSION

The next five to ten years, once *Affirming Brilliant Choices* has finally been implemented, will be a very exciting time for the Tuolumne County Green Cross. It'll show us if all the hopes and dreams we've had about helping the people of this county were invested properly, or if it will all come to naught. It'll show us that if the people of Tuolumne County have really been silently crying out for help, or if they don't want to be helped, and certainly not from us.

But what really makes the difference between success and failure of this program is the knowledge that we can properly and completely fulfill the obligations we have set for ourselves in this program. It would not only be unfair to us, but for the people of this fine county if our programs were not given the financial attention it so greatly deserves. A society that as given up on their own lives and subsequently chooses to escape from reality through any means is a society that has trouble functioning... and if we don't hurry to physically do something about this worsening trend, then we will have no society to return to.

It is our most sincere hope that the goodness of people's hearts finally come to the rescue of our fair and proud county, and for us to once again be the Golden Land that our ancestors during the Gold Rush saw it to be! We thank you for your interest in our program and look forward to your support.