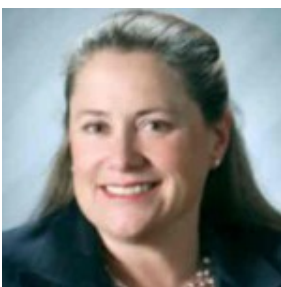


Opinion: Community house a good addition

By Jennifer Montgomery

On July 15, I was incredibly proud to represent the county of Placer and to represent the greater North Lake Tahoe area at the media tour of the New Community House (CoHo). CoHo will house the North Tahoe Family Resource Center, Project Mana, the Tahoe Safe Alliance, Placer County HHS employees and potentially some state of California Human Services staff.

Along with our nonprofit partners, Placer County has been a ready and willing partner in this public/private effort. Due to great vision in budgeting and planning by the Placer County Board of Supervisors, we had the opportunity to allocate \$1 million to help leverage the project. These are tax dollars that came through First 5, the Mental Health Services Act, and from the transient occupancy tax (hotel room tax) collected locally in the eastern end of Placer County. These dollars helped with the acquisition and remodel of the building as well as with installation of much needed public infrastructure like sidewalks and storm water retention basins.



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Private groups like the Tahoe Truckee Community Foundation and community leaders like Theresa May Duggan and Dave Ferrari (among many others) worked to create a remarkable model for

meeting community needs through an innovative public private partnership. The services available at CoHo go well beyond what the County traditionally offers and we believe it will result in getting families and individuals more quickly onto paths of self-sufficiency and will keep them there longer.

Not only is CoHo about taking care of people when they are in need, but it is about growing and celebrating that which is strong in them. CoHo intends to help individuals and families connect with resources like parenting and nutrition classes, educational opportunities and community building events. CoHo is about building strength, connectivity and individual self-reliance before crisis strikes.

In a time of limited government resources and increased need, it is these very types of innovative models – models that combine public and private dollars, models that combine multi use spaces into one center – that gives me great hope that solutions can be forged – are being forged – in the most creative ways, when dedicated, focused people come together.

I know that the rest of the BOS and county staff are also very proud of this model and are talking about it as a proactive, alternate way to offer services and stretch our limited public and private dollars.

I truly look forward to the day that when asked about community house, I can reply, “which one?”, referencing the fact that there will be a community house in each and every community. But for now we celebrate our own community house and the amazing individuals and entities that made it possible.

Congratulations to us all!

Jennifer Montgomery represents District 5 on Placer County Board of Supervisors.