

Project Respect and SMILE Invest in School Community

In April of this year, 2 Mariposa County Schools were chosen to participate in a full site and community implementation of character and relationship building lessons. The 2 selected schools are Mariposa Elementary School (K-6) and Lake Don Pedro Elementary (K-8). Project Respect has visibly encouraged teachers, students, and parents to reflect on their everyday social decisions and will partner with SMILE to broaden the effectiveness.

Project Respect (www.mariposarespect.net) is a community organization emphasizing anti-violence and anti-bullying through interactive lessons based mainly in schools. Over the last several years more classrooms and parenting forums placed trust in adding the Committee for Children's (www.cfchildren.org) *Second Step* and *Steps to Respect*, standards-based curriculum, to their universal approach of preventing anti-social behaviors.

SMILE, a cross-age after school mentoring program will provide elementary and high school aged students with experiences designed to discover strengths, celebrate individuality, develop leadership, increase resilience and enrich life through community linkages. The program will be a targeted prevention/intervention partnership with teachers, school counselors, and education professionals, and it will include a component for parent involvement in leadership development.

Together, the collaboration of Project Respect and SMILE will showcase a new relationship empowered to positively influence our personal lives and social interactions.

Congratulations to MES and LDP who will serve as the initial sites to introduce and develop the prevention and intervention programs. If successful they will become the example and resource for all other school sites to follow. Success of the collaboration will be based on specific outcomes, such as, but not limited to:

- Improved Academic Performance
- Reduced Discipline Problems
- Improved School Attendance
- Improved Social Skills

Many, many thanks go out to the organizers of this collaboration! They are Mountain Crisis Services, Mariposa Safe Families, Mariposa County Behavioral Health and Recovery Services, Project Respect, SMILE, and the Mariposa County Unified School District. Funding for the training, materials, personnel, and additional expenses is shared between MHSA Prevention and Early Intervention (PEI) funds and CDC CA Delta funds.