



El Dorado County District Attorney
778 Pacific Street
Placerville, CA 95667

August 19, 2020

Dear Mr. Pierson,

The goal of the Drug Store Project is to reduce the demand by youth to experiment with drugs in the first place. This comprehensive middle school drug prevention program is designed to educate youth about the real consequences of substance use and abuse. COVID-19, the global pandemic, has collided with another public health crisis our youth in Lake Tahoe face, substance use and abuse. We have vulnerable youth who are isolated at home with family members who use drugs, and this makes our efforts ever more important. The Association of American Medical Colleges reported in May of 2020, that more than 20 million people in the United States have a substance use disorder. COVID-19 has left many locked down, laid off, and flooded with uncertainty. Across the United States, as the COVID-19 pandemic has collided with the substance use epidemic, experts worry about the vast numbers of people who may be suffering from the impact and that includes our youth. Anxiety, grief, isolation, financial worries, changes at home and work, and an ongoing sense of uncertainty can all threaten people with a substance use disorder (SUD) as well as those at risk of developing one.

The Drug Store Project is a comprehensive middle school drug prevention program designed to educate youth about the dangers of substance use and abuse. Annually over 45 agencies (local, state, and federal level) and 225 volunteers come together for the common good: providing our youth with an impressive opportunity to learn that they themselves will be the individuals making the final decisions when it comes to drug experimentation and use.

Annually, our efforts provide 325 sixth-grade youth with a reality based and presented program using a story line of a youth choosing to use drugs and the consequences that can come from that. Each of the vignettes is presented by the real-life agencies doing what they do every day. This year we have selected 12 vignettes which complete a story: Introduction to the Event, Gateway Drug Class, The Pharmacy, Juvenile Hall, The Court Room, Counseling Scene, Party Scene, Emergency Room, The Funeral, "My Story", Project Hope, and Marijuana and the Brain which we will present in a safe and creative way.

Until March of 2020 and the COVID shutdown, we had held this event in the spring for the previous 16 years at Lake Tahoe Community College. The Drug Store Project is a grass roots effort in which the cost of the program is supported solely through donations and successful grant writing. With the unknown certainty we face today of California and Nevada youth attending school at all this year, we will be working with Tahoe Production House to film each of the vignettes in the agency's space where they will perform their 11-minute presentation beginning in October with post-production work completed by April.

Donation funds are being requested to help cover the cost of this production, which is a reduced rate, as Tahoe Production House has agreed to charge us \$600/vignette and they will donate the rest (normally \$1200/vignette for location set up, filming, post-production, etc.). This video production will then be available to the sixth-grade staff to assign to their students in the spring of 2021 just as if we were all together. We will also work with our seventh-grade staff to assign it to the youth who had to miss the event this last school year because of COVID.

This video production will NOT replace future live events, but it can be utilized for students who are absent the day of future events as well to keep everyone involved. A video production of The Drug Store Project will provide meaningful and accurate information for our youth and it will provide them with knowledge of the people and agencies in our community which can be of help to them and/or their family members and friends.

Who will we serve? This year 325 sixth-grade students from Lake Tahoe Unified School District, Zephyr Cove Elementary, and interested home-schooled youth will be served. In addition, we will work with seventh-grade staff to catch those youth who did not participate in the event last school year. 325 7th-grade youth from Tahoe Douglas High, South Tahoe Middle School and home schooled youth will also participate. Parents learn from their children by having discussions held at home following the event and the community itself learns more through the publicity of our event, from our website, our Facebook page, through Nixel text messages, and through the NextDoor platform.

Anticipated outcomes? The primary expected accomplishments of the Drug Store Project include the reduction of future drug experimentation/use/abuse and increase in student knowledge regarding the harmful effects and dangers of underage drinking and drug use. These expected outcomes are measured by pre and post event evaluations as well as debriefing sessions held after the event in each classroom following the event. As past project outcomes demonstrate, the Drug Store Project changes decisions, impacts behaviors, and ultimately changes young lives for the better. Our survey results are available at <http://www.makeschoolssafe.com> along with a detailed program description. Even though drugs remain prevalent in our community, we strongly believe that this program makes a difference to at least one child. It is that single child that drives us all to provide this program each and every year.

Amount being requested: Tahoe Youth & Family Services (TYFS) **respectfully requests \$2,000.00** to support the coordination and implementation of the Drug Store Project to be presented in April 2021. The total cost of this year's program is approximately \$17,000. The total cost per pupil (650+ youth this year) is approximately \$26.00; a small price for a life and excellent investment in each and every child. The emphasis to our youth is to know the dangers of ALL drugs and the negative impact it can have on their minds, bodies, home life and future aspirations. You can see more details of the event at www.makeschoolssafe.com

This year-long planning and implementation process has begun! The payee for funds is Tahoe Youth & Family Services with a memo for Drug Store Project. The address is: Tahoe Youth & Family Services, 1021 Fremont Avenue, South Lake Tahoe, CA 96150

I look forward to answering any questions you may have, and we appreciate all of your past support!

Best regards,

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