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Did it Again! 7 Schools Over 800 API

The staff and students of the Victor Elementary School District have done it again. Seven schools within the district hit and exceeded the state benchmark of 800 on the Academic Performance Index.

The district has more of its schools achieving high scores on the state tests than any other High Desert school district. Along with great success at the individual schools, the district's average API score for its 17 elementary schools is 761. The API is California's report card for schools and school districts. The scores are based on student achievement on standardized state tests.

The district's highest scoring school is Sixth Street Prep with a score of 861. This school has beaten the odds in numerous ways. It has the district's highest percentage of English-language learners and about 90 percent of the students come from low-income families.

Sixth Street Prep's success is a result of its great staff and the support of parents. To highlight their success, Sixth Street Prep was one of two schools Congressman Buck McKeon visited in May. Congressman McKeon is from Santa Clarita and represents part of the High Desert. While at the school, Congressman McKeon

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Congressman Buck McKeon visits Sixth Street Prep to hear about its amazing achievements.

VESD Tests Its Best Practices

National labor and education experts predict that by the time today's first-graders are in college, technology will be advancing at such a pace that half of the information they learn in their first year of college will be outdated before they graduate.

Technology has and will continue to change the world, including the way of educating children to be lifelong learners. In its constant effort to ensure that students are prepared for the world of work, Victor Elementary tests its practices against the best in the state.

The district has applied for the Eureka Award for Performance Excellence. This

is the top level award offered by the California Council for Excellence. The CAPE (California Awards for Performance Excellence) awards recognize California organizations for their improvement efforts. CAPE uses the internationally recognized Malcolm Baldrige Award Criteria to gauge performance excellence.

There are three levels of CAPE awards, and VESD was awarded the second level, the Prospector Award, in 2006.



Send Us Your Input Today

School leaders want to hear from parents and community members. The input and involvement of the entire community is critical to student success. The Victor Elementary School District established a Community Forum on its Web site to encourage and enable anyone to send thoughts, suggestions and questions at any time.

You can visit the Community Forum at www.vesd.net.

Vision Statement

To prepare students to be able to select from a variety of career opportunities and to be successful in the world of work.

Mission Statement

All students will be at or above grade level in reading, writing and mathematics as measured by results on state exams.

Beliefs

- All students can learn
- Schools are the center of learning
- Schools control enough of the variables to improve achievement for every student
- Effective district practices improve student achievement
- Effective principals create a high performing school team
- Effective instruction improves student achievement

Parent Basics - Created By Parents For Parents

Victor Elementary School District leaders continue to take steps to ensure all of its elementary schools are safe and positive environments for kids. As part of this effort, the district established basic standards of conduct for its staff. Then students met and created basic standards of conduct for themselves. Recently, parents created standards of conduct.

Parent representatives from each school were involved in the process of writing the basics. Once they had a draft together, it was sent out for feedback from all parents in the district, and the final product is based on that feedback. The Parent Basics are the standard of conduct expected of parents when they are on a school campus. The district provided a bookmark of the basics to all parents. See the Parent Basics below.

1. We will support my child's education by:
 - Ensuring my child is in school everyday on time.
 - Assisting my child with homework.
 - Having my child properly clothed and nourished for school.
2. We will be a positive influence on our children by having a good attitude, giving encouraging words, showing common courtesy and using appropriate language.
3. We think of ourselves as part of the school team, working together to help our children. Our success is measured by what we give.
4. We will participate, by giving and seeking information.
5. We need our children to be safe.
 - We will always think, safety first!
 - Abide by all traffic laws.
 - Follow parking lot drop off and pick up rules.
6. We are always ladies and gentlemen in all interactions, even when a conversation grows abusive and must be terminated.
7. We take pride in respecting each other with a positive attitude.
8. We will always set a good example by showing courtesy and appreciation by saying "please" and "thank you" to one another.
9. We will set the example for our youth by displaying appropriate dress and grooming.
10. We will always recognize each other immediately with eye contact, a smile, and their name whenever possible, using greetings such as "Good Morning" or "Good Afternoon."
11. We recognize the staff and administration have the children's and parent's best interest at heart.



VESD Vision

To prepare students to be able to select from a variety of career opportunities and to be successful in the world of work.

Mission

All students will be at or above level in reading, writing and mathematics as measured by results on state exams.

Parent Promise

We the parents of Victor Elementary School District promise to take an active role in our child's education and to set a positive example for students, teachers and others. We understand we need to be a part of the solution, not part of the problem.

We strive to build the future leaders of tomorrow.

Created by Parents for Parents

Challenger School Welcomes Reading Buddies



Challenger students Veronica Still (left) and Kiera Cooley (right) show off their books from the Reading Buddies kick off.

First-graders at Challenger School of Sports and Fitness have some new buddies. The San Bernardino County Superintendent of Schools, in partnership with the Victor Valley Chamber Foundation and the school district kicked off the Reading Buddies program at Challenger School in October. The volunteer reading program calls on business, civic, community and education leaders to promote the importance of reading by committing to read to students once a month.

“Reading is fundamental to quality education. It is a building block that fosters lifelong learning for all of us,” said Dr. Herbert Fischer, the San Bernardino County Superintendent of Schools. “It is important for our young people to see that reading has a role in everyone’s life.”

Business and Education Build Future Work Force

Victor Elementary School

District will be one of numerous local business and educational organizations participating in the upcoming C³ – Careers Connection Conference.

The conference is designed to create partnerships connecting business and community leaders with schools to build school-to-career programs. These programs will help the next generation and the future work force to be fully prepared to work in the real world.

The Victorville Chamber of Commerce’s newly established Business Education Committee is organizing the conference. The purpose of the committee is to develop and implement programs that impact the future employment of today’s students and the ability of local businesses to thrive in a global economy.

We hope to see many of our students, parents and teachers at this great conference on January 28, 2008.

Parameters

- Never place the district in financial risk
- Always use participatory management at all levels of the organization
- Always have avenues for stakeholders to communicate how to improve the district
- Always base decisions on what is best for all students
- Always accept responsibility; never behave as a victim
- Always have a safe, well-maintained campus

Congressman Visits Top Performing Schools

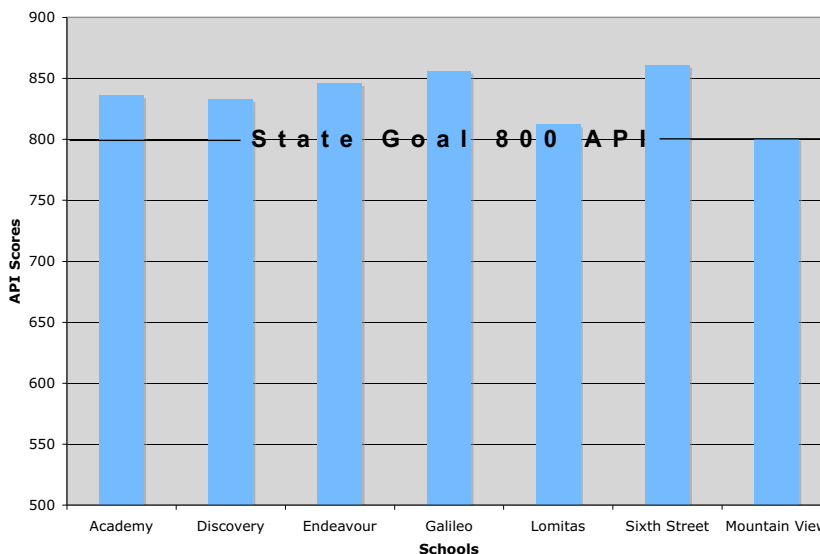
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met with district officials, visited numerous classrooms and spoke with students.

He asked many of the students what they wanted to be when they grew up and received a variety of answers. He encouraged all of the students to continue to work hard in school and to go on to college, as it is the key to success.

“Life is much better if you enjoy what you do, and education makes that possible,” Congressman McKeon said.

VESD Schools Over 800 API



Values

- Results
- Teamwork
- Self starters
- Work to others’ strengths
- Respectful behavior
- Positive attitude
- Authentic engagement
- Career goal setting

VESD Basics

1. Everything we do will advance our Vision, Mission and Motto, which shall be known, owned and energized by all.
2. The VESD Promise to Employees is our principle belief. It will be honored by everyone.
3. The Professional Guidelines for Common Courtesy are the standards for our conduct.
4. Meeting Guidelines serve as norms for all meetings.
5. We are ambassadors of the Victor Elementary School District. We speak positively about the district and each other at work and in the community.
6. We take personal responsibility for personal and group decisions; therefore, "We versus They" does not exist, we do not blame or make excuses.

District is Well Prepared for

Victor Elementary School District is preparing for major changes in its leadership.

At the end of the 2007-08 school year, three long-time assistant superintendents of the district will retire, and one year later Dr. Ralph Baker, Superintendent, plans to retire. The district has a firm plan in place to make smooth transitions for all of these important positions. District leadership started working on this plan three years ago.

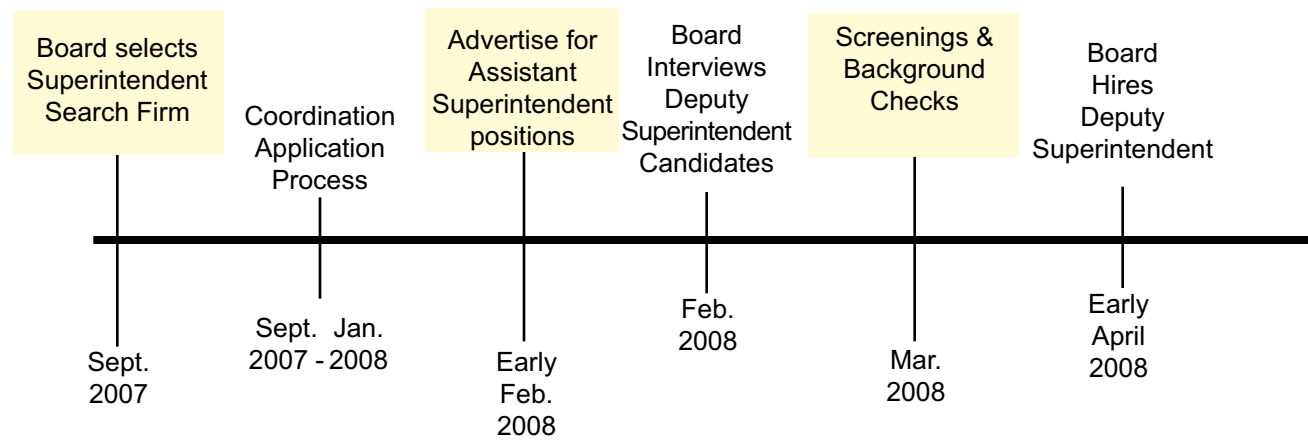
The district will bid farewell to Janet Young, Assistant Superintendent of Personnel Services, who has been with the district for 38 years, Marie Miller, Assistant Superintendent of Pupil Services, who has been with the district for 32 years and Jerene Creason, Assistant Superintendent of Administrative Services, who has been with



Dr. Ralph Baker
Superintendent
Retiring 2009
24 years of service



Janet Young
Assistant Superintendent of Personnel Services
Retiring 2008
38 years of service



2007-2008 Board Goals

As the district prepares for leadership changes, the role of the Board of Trustees becomes even more important. The Board will continue to guide the district, setting policy for the administrators, teachers and support staff to implement. This ensures that the progress the district has made will not be lost in the transition. The Board has already established the district's goals and objectives for the 2007-08 year.

GOAL #1: All schools will achieve the Board's "Learning for All Objectives."

Objective A: By August 2008, the district will implement strategies to support success of the "Learning for All" plan to increase the percentage of student proficiency in English Language Arts and math over prior year results.

Objective B: By June 2008, the district will create a three-to five-year staff development plan to improve staff (certificated, classified and administrative) professional expertise where at least 75 percent of staff who receive training will indicate implementation through follow-up surveys.

Objective C: By June 2008, as a result of the district's implementation of research-based learning strategies to improve student achievement, Student Learning Results will indicate 70 percent or greater.

Objective D: By June 2008, as a result of the implementation of the district technology plan with all stakeholders, at least 75 percent of participants in technology staff development will indicate implementation through follow-up surveys.

VESD Basics

Continued

7. Everyone has a responsibility to communicate concerns and possible solutions to the appropriate person – the appropriate person will ensure follow through to resolution. Seek a solution rather than a “rule book” response.

8. Give people your full attention – “Be There.” Always recognize each other immediately with eye contact, a smile and their name whenever possible, using greetings such as, “Good Morning,” “How may I help you?” “I would be happy to,” “Have you been helped?”

9. We return all calls or e-mails in a timely manner (phone calls within 3 rings, e-mails within 24 hours).

10. We are always Ladies and Gentlemen in all interactions, even when a conversation grows abusive and must be terminated.

Smooth Leadership Transition

the district for 21 years. Each of these committed educators will be greatly missed.

Dr. Baker started as superintendent in 1985. His long tenure has played a critical role in the success of the district, as it has provided continuity for student and staff achievement.

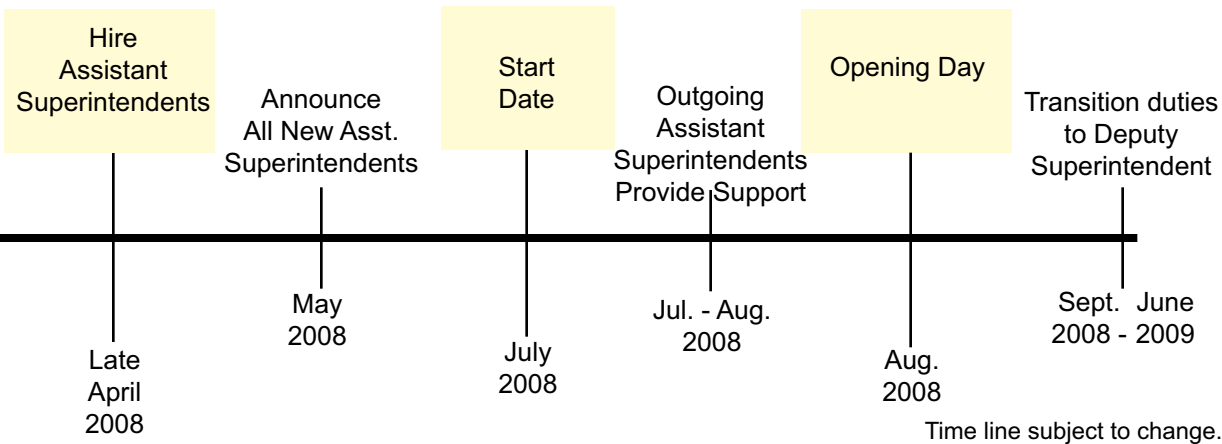
The Board of Trustees has already hired a firm to begin the search for a new superintendent. The plan includes interviewing candidates in February of 2008. The board’s goal is to select a candidate in April who will be hired as deputy superintendent. This will give the new hire a full year to serve under Superintendent Baker and make a smooth transition.

The other key positions will be filled at approximately the same time. This will allow the new deputy superintendent to participate in the selection of the new assistant superintendents.

Marie Miller
Assistant Superintendent
of Pupil Services
Retiring 2008
32 years of service



Jerene Creason
Assistant Superintendent
of Administrative Services
Retiring 2008
21 years of service



Goals and Objectives

GOAL #2: Create a district based on the principles of quality.

Objective A: By June 2008, implement principles of quality with all stakeholders as evidenced through CAPE process, with overall score summary of 65 percent.

GOAL #3: All schools will work to strengthen support from the employees, parents and community.

Objective A: By June 2008, increase public awareness of district effectiveness, evidenced by 90 percent approval rating on district effectiveness survey.

Objective B: By June 2008, positive survey results will indicate parent support for student success in answer to the question, “I am aware of or have received a copy of the Parent Basics card” with a return rate of at least 50 percent (baseline).

Objective C: By June 2008, employee support of Victor Elementary Education Foundation through contributions will increase by 10 percent of all employees.

GOAL #4: Articulate K-12 District Careers Curriculum.

Objective A: By June 2008, implement the district Careers Curriculum resulting in 25 percent of all fourth, fifth and sixth grade teachers showing evidence of completed student careers portfolios.

Objective B: By June 2008, 95 percent of students will demonstrate desirable behaviors.

GOAL #5: The district will achieve operational excellence.

Objective A: By June 2008, 100 percent of all departments will draft standards for operations.

VESD Basics

Continued

11. It is our responsibility to participate as a team member in a collaborative environment using ideas, resources and information to achieve common goals.
12. Think well of yourself and take pride in your professional dress, personal appearance and personal health.
13. We celebrate and recognize each other's accomplishments.
14. Respect and trust are the foundation of our organization. It is the responsibility of everyone to listen actively, participate constructively and communicate effectively. Seek first to understand, then to be understood.
15. Everyone honors agreements, schedules and timelines.
16. Treat people as you want them to become.

District Completes Construction Promise

West Palms Conservatory opened in September right on schedule. The newest school in the Victor Elementary School District is the final school that was included in the bond Victorville voters passed in 2001.

Thanks to those funds, the district was able to add three new schools to serve Victorville families. Along with West Palms Conservatory, the district constructed Challenger School of Sports and Fitness and Endeavour School of Exploration.

In order to pass a bond measure, a district must have a Citizens Oversight Committee that ensures the district follows the plan it laid out for voters. The district appreciates the members of this oversight committee for the time they have committed to the district and its projects.

Thank You Citizens Oversight Committee

Anthony Chambers
Doris Davies
Michael Elia
Robert Gaines Sr.
Andrew Jaramillo
Kim Koyle
Scott Priester
Russ Stringham

Bettye Underhill
Gary Moore
Ron Wilson
Jim Stasiak
Kirtland Mahlum
Crystal Caudle
Stephanie Hillstock
John Clayton



Teachers Support All Students

Within the Victor Elementary School District, teachers are actively identifying students who fall behind and placing those students into intervention programs earlier rather than later. As a result of the teachers' vigilant outlook, the district has a lower percentage of special education students compared to the region.

In the Special Education Local Plan Area, which includes school districts from the Cajon Pass to Needles, the average percentage of special education students is 7.7 percent. In the Victor Elementary School District, 5.65 percent of the students are considered special education students, said Marie Miller, assistant superintendent of pupil services.

Many students who could ultimately be placed in special education are given the support they need to catch up and improve before they ever fall far enough behind to be identified as special education students.

"We have a very strong intervention program throughout the district at every single one of our schools," Mrs. Miller said.

One of the key philosophies of the district leadership is that the skill and knowledge of the teacher makes the difference in student achievement. The district has worked to provide the knowledge and professional development teachers need to support all students.



Top right: Students at Challenger School raise the flag.

Left: Students at Endeavour School show their big smiles.



Left: West Palms is the newest school in the district, thanks to voters' support for the 2001 bond.

Sixth-Graders Eligible for Scholarships

The Victor Elementary Education Foundation is off to a great start with 42 percent of the sixth-graders who graduated in 2007 meeting the eligibility requirements allowing them to apply for scholarships upon graduation from high school.

The Victor Elementary Education Foundation was created to generate funding for scholarships to cover two years of tuition and books at Victor Valley College or an approved trade school. In order to be eligible for the scholarship program, students have to meet criteria starting in the sixth grade and must graduate from a local high school with a GPA of at least 2.5.

Available scholarships will be competitive until foundation funds increase to the point that all eligible students are able to receive the scholarship.

For the past year, the foundation has worked to generate donations from Victor Elementary School District employees. The foundation board is ready to begin the next phase of reaching out to local businesses and the community to build the scholarship fund.

The Foundation Board of Directors continues to dedicate their time and energy to ensure that Victor Elementary students will have a chance at a higher education.



In order to be eligible upon leaving sixth grade, students must:

- Attend at least one school year and be promoted from a Victor Elementary school to middle school.
- Score at or above “Basic” on state testing in English Language Arts and Math in sixth grade.
- Receive no more than one “at-home” suspension in sixth grade.
- Have no more than four unexcused absences in sixth grade.

Victor Elementary Education Foundation Board of Directors

- Lynne Cole, retired VESD teacher
- Nancee Fine, Victor Elementary Teachers Association
- Sam Gibbs, Victorville Target
- Val Matteson, Chamber of Commerce
- Marsha Owens, Classified School Employees Association
- Helen Young, Clarity Mortgage
- Janet Young, Victor Elementary School District

A special thank you to Linda Mikels, principal of Sixth Street Prep, for serving as a valuable resource to the board.

Congratulations to the 2007 Employees of the Year

Victor Elementary School District is proud to acknowledge its 2007 Employees of the Year.

Certificated staff selected Dina Piazza-Ramsey, a sixth grade teacher at Brentwood Elementary School, as the 2007 Certificated Employee of the Year. Mrs. Piazza-Ramsey has served the children in the district for more than 10 years. Her co-workers recognized her for her unique talent in connecting children to learning experiences that give them the skills they need to succeed in school. She not only builds their skills but also the hope they need to succeed in life. Her peers describe her as completely child centered, personable, energetic and committed to personal and professional growth.



Classified staff selected Roger Busch, an electrician, as the 2007 Classified Employee of the Year. Mr. Busch started with the district nearly 10 years ago and is recognized for his exemplary customer service and communication skills. His co-workers especially appreciate his “get it done right the first time” attitude. Mr. Busch took it upon himself to head up the department’s safety program and maintain the protective equipment inventory for the department.



The district is proud of all its staff, and the work they do every day to give Victorville students a quality education.

VESD Basics

Continued

17. Everyone is empowered. We involve people in the planning of the work that affects them.

18. It is the responsibility of everyone to create an environment of teamwork and lateral service so that everyone’s needs are met.

19. We always seek ways to improve current systems and are proactive in seeking opportunities for innovation.

20. Think safety first. Everyone is responsible for creating a safe, secure and accident free environment.

21. Everyone is responsible for continuing to improve his or her personal competence.

22. Be flexible and adopt “A Whatever It Takes” attitude to ensure that everyone succeeds.

Diagnosis for Success: Dowain Wright, M.D., Ph.D.

Dr. Dowain Wright grew up in Victorville attending local, public schools. Today he is the Medical Director of the Division of Rheumatology and Immunology at Children's Hospital Central California in Madera.

Dr. Wright remembers his elementary years at Del Rey and Park View elementary schools as a time of support during tough times which gave him opportunities to grow.

"I received a firm foundation in academic and emotional support from my elementary teachers that has served me well throughout my life and gave me the tools to succeed," Dr. Wright said.

In kindergarten through third grade he attended Del Rey where nearly everyone rode their bike or walked to school.

"It was a safe and nurturing environment," Dr. Wright recalls.

He later transferred to Park View where most students rode the bus, but the nurturing environment didn't change. He spent three months of his first year at the new school in a wheel chair with double casts on his legs due to severe bone spurs that made it too painful to walk. He was in the fourth grade at this time, but the other students and teachers were extremely supportive, Dr. Wright said.

Dr. Wright was soon selected for the Mentally Gifted Minors program, now called GATE. This allowed him to stretch his academic abilities outside the scope of



Dr. Dowain Wright, Medical Director of the Division of Rheumatology and Immunology at Children's Hospital Central California in Madera.

the normal classroom. It included hands-on projects with other bright students. One of the fun projects Dr. Wright remembers is making a film.

With a strong academic foundation established in his early years, Dr. Wright went on to attend Victor Valley High School. It was in high school that he began to advance and gain a love for biology and math as well as sports. Dr. Wright participated in cross country, wrestling, track and swimming. Although there were no Advanced Placement courses at the time, he graduated in 1978 fully prepared for college.

Dr. Wright attended the University of California, Riverside where he earned a bachelor's degree in biochemistry. He then went on to complete doctorate and medical degrees in molecular virology at

the University of California, San Diego. He completed his internship and residency in pediatric medicine at the Children's Hospital in Boston as well as a fellowship in immunology and rheumatology at the Children's Hospital, Boston and Harvard Medical School.

Along with his work in the children's hospitals, Dr. Wright has worked as an assistant professor in pediatrics at Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia and currently is a clinical assistant professor in pediatrics at the University of California, San Francisco.

Dr. Wright continues to lead an active life. He is an avid swimmer. In the past few years, he has participated in swimming races from Angel Island in the San Francisco Bay to the city of Tiburon. He swam from Alcatraz to San Francisco and participated in a nine-mile relay race in Hawaii from the island of Lanai to Maui.

Dr. Wright has been married to his wife, Trish, for 20 years. They have two boys, Cary, 14, and Justin, 11, who both swim and play water polo.

Dr. Wright is active in service to the community through USA Swimming. He also serves on the board of directors of Kings View Corporation, a multi-million dollar non-profit Christian based corporation that provides mental health and substance abuse treatment in Central and Northern California.

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