



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**TRANSITIONS-MENTAL HEALTH ASSOCIATION RECEIVES WONDERFUL
GRANT FROM THE WEINGART FOUNDATION**

San Luis Obispo, CA – Transitions-Mental Health Association (TMHA) is delighted to receive a generous grant from The Weingart Foundation. TMHA is a community based, non-profit human services agency serving people who live in San Luis Obispo and Northern Santa Barbara Counties.

The Core Support funding of \$150,000 over two years will advance the mission of of TMHA's Northern Santa Barbara programs by supporting our general operating expenses. The target population for the funding is adults and transition-age youth who have severe and persistent psychiatric disabilities.

One such program that will benefit is the Growing Grounds Farm, an employment program TMHA has operated in Santa Maria since 2000. This program provides horticultural therapy, vocational training, independent living skills and paid employment annually to over 40 people with a severe mental illness.

"We intend to expand Growing Grounds Farm by partnering with Foodbank and the U.C. Cooperative Extension Service to grow vegetable seedlings for people who rely on the Foodbank for survival. We are doing this to teach people how to grow their own food and increase their access to healthy fresh vegetables," said Frank Ricceri, Associate Director at TMHA who oversees Northern Santa Barbara County.

TMHA also operates two Learning Recovery Communities (RLC) in Santa Maria and in Lompoc that promote independence and recovery through activities by and for people who have experience as consumers of mental health services.

TMHA will use the grant from the Weingart Foundation to purchase food for both RLC programs which serve people who are low income and to provide additional staff for the Lompoc RLC. Weingart funding will provide rent subsidies to clients who desperately need housing as well as cover their maintenance and utilities costs and will hire a part-time staff person to help people maintain their housing. The grant will pay for client wages and staff at Growing Grounds Farm, which relies solely on sales and private foundation revenue.

"The tangible result of this Core Support funding will be that 11 adults with severe mental illness will receive safe, well-maintained, subsidized housing, 211 very low income individuals with mental illness

will have access to food four to five days a week at the Santa Maria and Lompoc RLCs, and up to 70 clients will receive a part-time job at Growing Grounds Farm over the next two years,” said Ricceri.

ABOUT THE WEINGART FOUNDATION

The Weingart Foundation makes grants to assist organizations that work in the areas of health, human services, and education. The Foundation gives highest priority to activities that provide greater access to people who are economically disadvantaged and underserved. Of particular interest to the Foundation are applications that specifically address the needs of low-income children and youth, older adults, and people affected by disabilities and homelessness. The Foundation also funds activities that benefit the general community and improve the quality of life for all individuals in Southern California. During the past thirty-six years (1972-2009), the Foundation authorized grants of more than \$856 million to support a variety of Southern California social services, educational, and community programs. With assets of approximately \$600 million, the Foundation continues to be a major philanthropic institution serving the needs of Southern California. For more information, visit www.weingartfnd.org.

ABOUT T-MHA

Transitions-Mental Health Association is a non-profit organization that helps children and adults live, work and grow in our community. TMHA operates 27 programs at over 35 locations that reach over 2,000 people and 1,500 families in San Luis Obispo and Santa Barbara counties. The emphasis of TMHA's many services is to teach vital independent living skills, and build a framework for community re-entry through personal empowerment and hands on experience. For over 30 years, T-MHA has been dedicated to providing housing, employment, case management and life-skills support to teens and adults with mental illness; and support, resources and education for their loved ones. For more information, visit www.T-MHA.org.

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