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Monica DuPea, executive director of Nevada Youth Empowerment Program, is a 2011 RGJ Twenty Under 40 award winner. / David B. Parker/RGJ ConsumerProductsDigest.com

Background

I worked in the casino industry for a few years and found myself feeling very unfulfilled. I was also in the process of moving to Fallon from Reno. I learned of a job opening at New Frontiers Treatment Center providing HIV/STD education and testing and I applied. This was my first job in non- profit, working under a wonderful man, Kevin Quint. From there I was offered employment at NNHOPES to provide HIV/STD education and testing throughout rural Nevada. I worked at NNHOPES for several years. I was part of a team that began NNHOPES outreach effort, Hopes on the Streets. I also established their blood draw site. In 2007, I opened a community based non-profit, Nevada Youth Empowerment Project (NYEP).

Why do I do what I do

I have a great belief in young people. It frightens and concerns me to think we have a significant portion of the transitioning youth population that is not prepared for our workforce. Many youth today lack the skills or behaviors to be self sufficient and without consistent involvement with an appropriate, skilled adult, the situation will likely not change.

What brought me to Reno or why I stay in Reno

I really enjoy Reno. We get to experience all weather seasons here, we have a great river, awesome events (Rib Cook Off!) and many active and forward thinking people.

What I do to leave work at the office

I don't consider my work to be my job, it's part of my life. The relationships necessary to assist a youth in facilitating change cannot be dictated by the hands on a clock.

How I give back to my community

I regularly give back to my community by volunteering and serving various agency missions through individual and group events.

Best business book I've read lately

"The Art of War for Managers" by Sun Tzu

Best place in Reno to meet with clients or colleagues

I love meeting at NYEP so I can show people the program!



My leadership philosophy

I believe there are certain characteristics/qualities that a person is born with. I try to find these individuals and teach them the requirements of the job.

Feeling compelled to go back to the home if there is a situation, going over and above to achieve an outcome, caring about causing more harm than good and ensuring that what is said is beneficial to the youth, are qualities that cannot be taught. NYEP doesn't mold people to fit job descriptions but rather refines the job descriptions to fit the team.

Notable Achievements

- » Excellence in Non Profit Management, 2008
- » Soroptomist Ruby Award, 2011
- » Senatorial and Congressional Recognition for Nevada Youth Empowerment Project, 2008
- » Summer of Service Award for NYEP, 2011

If I could do something else, I would:

You don't have to daydream when you love what you do.

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