



COUNTY OF YOLO

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Public Defender's Office Hosts Holistic Defense Fundraiser March 15

(Woodland, CA) – The Yolo County Public Defender's Office is pleased to host the Holistic Defense Fundraiser on March 15, 5:00 to 8:00 p.m., at Blue Note Brewing Company in Woodland. Funds raised will be used to provide necessary and basic supports to their most vulnerable clients.

This fundraiser is scheduled to coincide with the 56th anniversary of *Gideon v. Wainwright*, the landmark Supreme Court decision which guaranteed quality legal representation to those who cannot afford their own attorney. In addition to providing zealous criminal justice advocacy, the Public Defender's Office is committed to providing clients holistic defense – a model which involves stepping outside the courtroom to understand and advocate for means to address their clients' unmet needs.

Every day, indigent residents of Yolo County have essential needs that are unsupported, often leading to involvement in the criminal justice system. Once entangled in the system, these needs compound and are exacerbated. Vulnerable residents face a myriad of challenges and barriers as they navigate the criminal justice system and attempt to transition back into the community. For instance, indigent adult clients who find themselves released from jail on a weekend must wait to reinstate their CalFresh (food stamp) benefits, leaving them without resources to purchase food for days. Many clients also have no means to pay for transportation to court or co-pays on essential medication. Indigent youth involved with the criminal justice system struggle with consequences, such as isolation and depression, without the supports necessary to combat a downward spiral or encourage growth and better outcomes. Currently, there are no dedicated funds in the county to help bridge these gaps.

"I have seen post-release prescriptions range in cost from a few dollars to hundreds of dollars," said Yolo County Social Worker Emily Kochly. "Any cost can be prohibitive for our indigent clients and become obstacles to remaining stable in the community, leading to quick deterioration."

"No client should pick up Failure to Appear charges due to inability to afford bus fare, nor be released from custody without access to food, clothing or essential medication," said Yolo County Public Defender Tracie Olson. "Beyond our annual clothing drive, there is more we can do with the community's support."

Please join the Public Defender's Office and other humanitarians, dignitaries and partners on Friday, March 15, from 5:00 to 8:00 p.m. at Blue Note Brewing Company, located at 750 Dead Cat Alley in Woodland to raise funds to assist indigent clients. Funds will be raised by a 50/50 raffle and silent auction with some auction items made by clients, including artwork created by youth in juvenile hall (in partnership with YoloArts) and inmates in the county jail, as well as metal/wood pieces created by formerly incarcerated individuals in a rehabilitative construction training program (in partnership with Northern CA Construction Training).

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