



## **New YFRC Executive Director returns to Woodland with wealth of youth services experience**

Robert Ekstrom, former executive director of WIND Youth Services, a Sacramento program serving homeless teens, has accepted the position of executive director of the Yolo Family Resource Center. He replaced Carolyn Castillo Pierson, who retired in February.

"I am very excited about the opportunity to work with such an outstanding program and dedicated staff," said Ekstrom. "The FRC has a long history of providing critically needed services to children and families in Yolo County."

Ekstrom brings extensive experience to the Yolo FRC. He began his career after graduation from college as a 21-year-old social worker with Stanislaus County Welfare. His career was interrupted by military induction in 1969 where he served in tour in Vietnam as a non-commissions officer. After discharge from the Army, he returned to work as a social worker in children services and foster placement. He returned to college where he earned his Masters in Social Work. Upon graduation, he started a career with the California Youth Authority, first as a social worker and then in parole services.

Ekstrom's Woodland ties date back to 1986, when he ran a parole sub-office for the California Youth Authority. After retiring from State service, as the Assistant Deputy Director of Youth Authority Parole in 2000, he taught at CSU, Sacramento and became executive director for WIND Youth Services in 2002. During his six-year tenure at WIND he became recognized as a powerful voice for the plight and needs of homeless children and families.

Under Ekstrom's leadership as executive director, he was able to lead WIND Youth Services through tremendous growth not only as an agency, but also as a leading advocate in the treatment of homeless children. Through his passion and ability, he was able to not only identify the extent of the issue of homeless children, but also to articulate a vision of the help they needed to overcome the traumas of homelessness and move forward in developing healthy lives. Some of his accomplishments include having developed an on-site chartered full time junior high and high school program for homeless youth, a state licensed youth crisis shelter, a day center facility, and a case management and clinical services program. In collaboration with the University of California, Davis Medical School he initiated a program to provide web-based personalized medical records for this very transient population. He was able to develop over two million dollars in new grants and funding to support these programs.

The Yolo Family Resource Center has been a leader in linking individuals and families of Yolo County to services. The value of the FRC is that it operates as a one-stop service hub to bring together programs that educated, develop skills, link to other community services, and help clients to move in new directions. The FRC is a place where anyone can go for help and get the information they need regardless of eligibility or ability to pay. A central focus of the FRC is that no one agency or program has the expertise or ability to do everything, but by working together we can develop healthy families, which leads to healthy communities.