



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

December 8, 2023

Ashley Beck

Tahoe Truckee Community Foundation

ashley.anne.beck@gmail.com

978.761.8866

Spotlighting Local Excellence

The Community Collaborative Honors Three Outstanding Social Service Professionals in Tahoe Truckee

TRUCKEE, Calif. - The Community Collaborative of Tahoe Truckee (CCTT), a program of the Tahoe Truckee Community Foundation, announced the recipients of its annual awards during its monthly partner meeting on December 5, 2023.

These individuals have been recognized by their peers for making invaluable contributions to the community. Nominations for CCTT's annual awards were received from partners in November. A committee assisted in selecting winners in three categories. Our local community members who go above and beyond every day for all of us are as follows:

- The Public Service Award of Excellence awarded to Maddie Leh, Program Coordinator at Adventure Risk Challenge (ARC);
- The Chris Ballin Award awarded to Erica Mertens, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Program Manager for the Town of Truckee; and
- CCTT Partner of the Year awarded to Anne Rarick, Manager of Tahoe Truckee COAD (Community Organizations Active in Disaster).

"The caliber of nominations we received this year is a testament to the depth of our collaboration. Those chosen for awards are truly the trailblazing stars among us, sparking a profound sense of admiration and inspiration within our community. We take great pride in joining together at this meeting to acknowledge and celebrate their commendable efforts," said CCTT Program Director Kristina Kind.

Since 2007, the Collaborative has annually recognized the work of partners from over 45 health, social service, education and community-based organizations who collaborate, network, and work together to maximize resources for children, families and seniors in the North Lake Tahoe Truckee region.

Public Service Award of Excellence: As ARC's Program Coordinator, Maddie Leh collaborates with Tahoe Truckee Unified School District (TTUSD) administrators, staff, and community partners to deliver impactful programming to teens. She is currently revamping ARC's programming at Truckee High, continuing programming at North Tahoe High, and mentoring ARC staff. Her genuine care for students is evident in her one-on-one interactions. Beyond academics, she coordinates weekend programs, offering mentorship, meals, and transportation to establish a safe and engaging space for learning and leadership development. Her multifaceted contributions to the Truckee Tahoe community,

particularly in empowering students, advocating for parent engagement, and engaging in social justice initiatives exemplify the qualities of an outstanding community leader and service provider.

The Chris Ballin Award: Erica Mertens, Town of Truckee Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Program Manager, received this award, in memory of Chris Ballin, the founder of La Comunidad Unida in the 1980s. It recognizes Mertens' dedication to prioritizing equity in her work with the community. Marten's is the sole position within our network of Collaborative partners with diversity, equity, and inclusion in her job title. She stands as a leader advocating for cultural competency, equality, and racial justice. Serving as a member of the CCTT Racial Equity subcommittee, she has played a crucial role in directing CCTT's racial equity learning journey, bringing resources and training to more than 60 CCTT partners. Additionally, she co-founded the DEI Collaborative, uniting various community partners to collaborate on social justice issues. As a Collaborative, we acknowledge and honor the courage, strength, and tenacity she brings to the work, and we stand in support of her.

CCTT Partner of the Year: Anne Rarick, Tahoe Truckee COAD Manager, has been a longstanding member of the Collaborative. She has worn various hats over the years and engaged with community members on issues such as food security, housing, and mental health. Last year, she embraced a new role as COAD Manager, unfamiliar to both her and the community. She regularly convenes a diverse group of interest holders, including law enforcement agencies, emergency responders, and county and non-profit partners to orchestrate collaboration across multiple jurisdictions, communication platforms, and counties. Her work ensures an integrated and aligned emergency response across the region. The Collaborative is grateful for her exemplary leadership in regional collaboration.

About the Community Collaborative of Tahoe Truckee (CCTT):

CCTT, a program of Tahoe Truckee Community Foundation (TTCF), is comprised of more than 45 health, education, and social service organizations and coalitions. These partners have worked together for more than 25 years to address the complex issues and fundamental needs of community members. The Collaborative seeks to understand the stories of our local people, and we root our work in the power of data to inform our leaders and drive results.

About Tahoe Truckee Community Foundation:

TTCF connects people and opportunities, generating resources to build a more caring, creative, and effective community. TTCF was established in 1998 thanks to the vision of William Hewlett who loved the Sierra Nevada and worked to protect this area. In 25 years, TTCF has served the Tahoe Truckee region by identifying emerging needs and working collaboratively with regional stakeholders to address them. TTCF holds \$34 million in assets and has distributed more than \$30 million in local grants and scholarships in partnership with its donors.

#