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## **Giving a hand up**

**By Ching Lee**

A car accident left Andre Ramirez unable to use her left hand. Being left-handed, the Marysville High School junior said she had to gradually learn how to use her right hand.

"I don't really do stuff as fast as other people," said the 16-year-old. "So I have to go slower."

At the second annual Transition Faire on Wednesday, Ramirez wanted to find out what options she has in finding a job or a career after high school.

Organized by Yuba and Sutter counties' One-Stop Centers through the Workability Program, the one day event at the Marysville Youth and Civic center brought together some 18 agencies to assist more than 200 high school students from Yuba, Sutter, and Colusa counties who have special needs and disabilities.

"We felt that if they learn about all the agencies that are available, then they would have the information and support they need to make a successful transition to adult life," said Linda Cox, Business and workforce specialist for the Sutter county One-Stop Business Center.

For Ramirez, who said she wants to be a writer, she learned about jobs that would give her experience in typing and working with computers.

"I learned a lot from this experience," she said. "I think it's really good to come here and see what kinds of options there are and just knowing that someone actually cares about your future."

Robert Parkerson, 15, is interested in a career in flying, but realizes his disability will most likely take him in a somewhat different course, probably in the military.

"I have one bad eye, so I won't be able to fly a helicopter and stuff like that," said Parkerson. "I found out there are other jobs like desk jobs and being a drill instructor. I also found out there's a job as a communicator and translator where you decipher messages from the commander."

Parkerson said he is leaning toward a career as a translator or something in the military.

“There’s something for everyone,” said Susan cherry, a special education teacher at Marysville High School. “The real trick is matching.”

Seventeen-year-old high school senior Josh Daniels, who said he has “trouble reading and writing,” was hoping to find a job in construction. Daniels, who currently lives in Yuba City, but works on a ranch in Glenn and Colusa counties, said he wanted to find something close to home. He spoke to representatives from the California Conservation Corps but was unable to find anything in construction locally.

“One-Stop said they could help me look for a job,” he said. “They can’t give me a job, but will help me search for one in my area.”

Jamirose Hanson, a junior in high school who said she has a learning disability, liked that the fair enticed the students with games and door prizes, which she thought made things more interesting.

Hanson said she would like a career working with elderly people. At 16, she wants to find job opportunities that would give her training in nursing and assisting the elderly.

“I used to take care of my grandma, and I still want to do it,” Hanson said. “I thought (the fair) was a good idea, and I wish they’ll do it again next year.”

Some of the agencies that participated in the event included the Yuba County Office of Education, Quality Education Services and Training, Pride Industries, Easter Seals, and the Career Training and Education Center. Last year, only about 10 agencies participated in the fair, Cox said. This year, the participants have almost doubled.

“We’re really starting to grow, and we plan on doing this every year,” Cox said.

Cox hopes to recruit private industries such as Freemont-Rideout Foundation to participate in the fair in the future.

Danette Harrison, a support employment coordinator for Quality Education Services and Training, said many of the agencies already work together to help the people they serve.

“I don’t think a lot of people know how much assistance there is out there,” Harrison said. “So it’s great to see them all here.”

